

Dhammadakya Open University, California, USA



EXEMPLARY CONDUCT OF THE PRINCIPAL TEACHERS  
OF VIJJA DHAMMAKAYA

GL 305E



**Exemplary Conduct**  
**of the Principal Teachers of Vijja Dhammakaya**  
**GL 305E**

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December 2553



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# Introduction

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The course ‘Exemplary Conduct of the Principal Teachers of Vija Dhammakaya, GL 305E’ is one of the five courses which deal with Life’s Objective. It is advised that the student of this course understands the interrelatedness of these five courses which include:

GL 101E Buddhist Cosmology

GL 102E The Hereafter

GL 203E The Law of Kamma

GL 204E Buddhahood

GL 305E Exemplary Conduct of the Principal Teachers of Vija Dhammakaya

The aim of these courses is to emphasize the fact that without exception, ***“All of us are here on earth to pursue Perfections”***. We need to be cognizant of the fact that the world in which we live is but a small part of the gigantic prison. This prison houses all living beings as they are forced to undergo the round of rebirth indefinitely. We need to realize that the only way for us to be emancipated from the endless suffering of the round of rebirth is to undertake the ultimate self-training by pursuing Perfections after the manner of every great Bodhisatta.

## **How These Five Courses Are Interrelated:**

It may be said that the three courses: Buddhist Cosmology, the Hereafter, and the Law of Kamma are so closely related that they can actually be combined into a single course. However, this will make for a very thick course book. It will also make the material too difficult to study in detail within the given timeframe.

**Buddhist Cosmology:** This course deals with life in the universe which consists of the 31 realms of existence. It gives some details about the repeated cycle of the formation, existence, and annihilation of part of the universe, the Law of Kamma, the Hereafter, etc.

**The Hereafter:** This course deals with Buddhist Cosmology in greater detail by emphasizing the round of rebirth of the myriad living beings within the 31 realms of existence. It deals with the overall wholesome and unwholesome deeds of a living being which cause it to be reborn in a particular realm of existence as dictated by the Law of Kamma.

**The Law of Kamma:** This course deals with Buddhist Cosmology in greater detail by emphasizing the working mechanism of the Law of Kamma. It is the Law of Kamma that produces the fruit of Kamma in accordance with each living being’s overall wholesome and

unwholesome deeds. The fruit of Kamma is in turn the very mechanism which propels each living being to be reborn in a particular realm of existence. Predominantly wholesome deeds cause a living being to be reborn in a fortunate realm such as the Celestial Realm, the Brahma Realm, etc. Predominantly unwholesome deeds cause a living being to be reborn in an unfortunate realm such as the Hell Realm, the Peta Realm, the Asurakaya Realm, etc.

These three courses aim to help the student look at life in the round of rebirth realistically so that the student can fully appreciate how the round of rebirth is the enormous prison which is fraught with suffering, danger, and harm. None of us can afford to sleepwalk through life in ignorance. All of us need to awaken to Knowledge and endeavor to hasten to pursue Perfections every minute of every day of our life so that we can begin to work our way toward emancipation and free our self from the round of rebirth.

Without a proper role model, it will be extremely difficult if not impossible for us to know how to begin the pursuit of Perfections. It is for this reason that the course Buddhahood has been made available so that the student can learn about the pursuit of Perfections from our Lord Buddha during the countless existences in which He was pursuing Perfections as a great Bodhisatta.

**Buddhahood:** This course deals in detail about how our Lord Gautama Buddha had pursued Perfections as a Bodhisatta starting from the existence where He first aspired to Buddhahood until the time He became self-enlightened as the Lord Buddha. This course also presents details about the Lord Buddha's birth, His Self-Enlightenment, the establishment of Buddhism, and finally His attainment of Complete Nibbana. Without the happening of the Lord Buddha, the truth about life and the universe would have still remained hidden from us. And we would not have had the opportunity to begin pursuing Perfections and working our way toward emancipation from the endless round of rebirth.

**Exemplary Conduct of the Principal Teachers of Vijja Dhammakaya:** It is a fact that all of us today were not born in time to meet with the Lord Buddha and the Arahats. We can only learn about the pursuit of Perfections of the Lord Buddha and the Arahats from what had been recorded in the Tripitaka. However, if there are individuals in this day and age that can follow in the Lord Buddha's footsteps so successfully that they can achieve morality, concentration, and insight, then for certain these individuals can serve as our role models and help us to get a better handle on how to start pursuing Perfections here and now.

There are two personages in our days that have been recognized by a great number of followers as being exceptional role models when it comes to putting their lives on the line in the way that they pursued Perfections after the manner of the Lord Buddha. These two personages are The Most Venerable Phramonkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro), the Abbot of Wat Paknam and Master Nun Chandra Khonnokyoong. It is the exemplary conduct of these two principal teachers of Vijja Dhammakaya that the student of this course will learn about. Both these personages had the aspiration to propagate the Lord Buddha's Teachings to every corner of the world so that

every human being can have the correct understanding about life and the world. It can be foreseen that once this aspiration is realized and everyone strives to work toward his own emancipation from the round of rebirth, world peace will become a reality.

This course material is divided into two parts. The first part of the course book deals with the life history and exemplary conduct of the Most Venerable Phramonkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro), the Abbot of Wat Paknam and the Discoverer of Vijja Dhammakaya. The second part deals with the life history and exemplary conduct of Master Nun Chandra Khonnokyoong, the perpetuator of Vijja Dhammakaya. This course book also presents how these two personages were related to each other as master and pupil.

This course material allows the student to appreciate both masters' incomparable virtue and how their exemplary conduct distinguishes them from ordinary people. They have been well-loved and highly venerated by multitudes both inside and outside the country. Moreover, it is hoped that having taken the course the student will be motivated to follow in their footsteps.





## Preface

The course 'Exemplary Conduct of the Principal Teachers of Vijja Dhammakaya, GL 305E' aims to help the student understand the pursuit of Perfections of the two principal teachers of Vijja Dhammakaya namely the Most Venerable Phramonkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro) and Master Nun Chandra Khonnokyoong. Both masters have practiced the Lord Buddha's Teachings to such an extent that they had met with exceptional success. It was due to their aspiration to spread the Lord Buddha's Teachings worldwide that many have come to learn about Vijja Dhammakaya.

The committee has compiled this course material in order to enable the student to gain a deep understanding about these masters' life history, and how their exemplary conduct and their pursuit of Perfections can motivate us to follow in their footsteps.

The preparation of this course material has been a team effort. It is possible that even after many rounds of editing and cross-editing, the material may still contain mistakes. The Committee hopes that it will receive comments and feedback which will allow it to further improve upon this course material.

The Committee

September B.E. 2549

# Course Syllabus

## 1. Description of the Course Material

GL 305E Exemplary Conduct of the Principal Teachers of Vija Dhammakaya

This course presents the life history, the routine practice, the exemplary conduct of the Most Venerable Phramonkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro)<sup>1</sup>, the Abbot of Wat Paknam and the Discoverer of Vija Dhammakaya and Master Nun Chandra Khonnokyoong<sup>2</sup>. Their lives are true examples of how the earnest practice of meditation can lead one to attain Enlightenment. Their lives bear witness to the Lord Buddha's Self-Enlightenment. They are the true role models for all people past, present, and future in the pursuit of Perfections.

## 2. Course Objectives

1. To enable the student to learn about the life history, the routine practice, and the exemplary conduct of the Most Venerable Phramonkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro), the Abbot of Wat Paknam, and Master Nun Chandra Khonnokyoong as well as their great contributions to Buddhism, Vija Dhammakaya, society, the nation, and the world.
2. To enable the student to learn about the teachings of the Most Venerable Phramonkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro), the Abbot of Wat Paknam and Master Nun Chandra Khonnokyoong so that the student can be motivated to follow in their footsteps.

## 3. Topics Covered in the Course

Part 1 The life history of the Most Venerable Phramonkolthepmuni (Luang Pu), the Discoverer of Vija Dhammakaya.

Part 2 The life history of Master Nun Chandra Khonnokyoong (Khun Yai), the Perpetuator of Vija Dhammakaya.

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<sup>1</sup> The revered monk is most often referred to as Luang Pu Wat Paknam or just Luang Pu.

<sup>2</sup> The revered nun is most often referred to as Khun Yai Acariya or just Khun Yai.

# Method of Study

## 1. Preparation for Self-Study

In order to achieve the objective of the course, the student should do as follows.

- a. Spend an hour each day on the course material and attempt to finish each chapter within one to two weeks.
- b. Complete the exercises provided for each chapter.
- c. Peruse the books and other teaching media listed in the workbook.

## 2. The Exercises

The student should complete all of the exercises and activities listed in the workbook at the time suggested. This is the best way to ensure that the student fully understands the course material. Moreover, these exercises help prepare the student for the final exam.

## 3. Studying the Course Material

Before beginning each chapter, the student should first go over the layout of the chapter in terms of its topics, concepts, and objectives before proceeding with the detailed study.

After studying each topic, the student should write down its main points and complete the exercises and activities suggested in the workbook. This will allow the student to evaluate how well he has comprehended the subject material and how well he can apply what he has learnt to his daily life.

## 4. Long-Distance Learning via Satellite and Other Media

The Study of Dhamma for the Environment Foundation broadcasts its programs via satellite to present information which promotes morality. It also presents information about the life and times of the Most Venerable Phramonkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro) and Master Nun Chandra Khonnokyoong. The student should avail himself of such information. More information about the programs broadcasted via satellite can be obtained from the DOU Coordination Center. The student should also peruse the books and other media as suggested in the workbook.

## **5. Exam**

The open book exam consists of essay questions and multiple choice questions and is meant to evaluate how well the student comprehends the course material. However, it is more important that the student knows how to look up relevant subjects as well as applying what he has learnt to his daily life so that he can increasingly meet with success and prosperity in his life.

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Phramonkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro)

The Discoverer of Vijja Dhammakaya

# **Part 1**

**The Life History of the Most Venerable  
Phramonkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro)  
The Discoverer of Vijja Dhammakaya**

# Part 1

## The Life History of the Most Venerable Phramonkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro), the Discoverer of Vijja Dhammakaya

- **His Life History**

- Luang Pu's Younger Years**

- As an Infant, Luang Pu Was Supremely Patient

- As an Infant, Luang Pu Had the Wisdom to Teach Himself

- Luang Pu Had a Penchant for Chastity Practice

- Luang Pu Had a Resolute Nature

- Luang Pu Had an Abiding Faith in the Triple Gem

- Luang Pu Was Loving and Kind

- Luang Pu Treated His Subordinates with Generosity

- Luang Pu's Schooling

- Luang Pu Worked Hard to Earn Right Livelihood

- Luang Pu Possessed a High Intellect



### **Luang Pu's Ordination**

Luang Pu Vowed to Ordain for Life

Luang Pu Eagerly Sought Dhamma Knowledge

Studying the Scriptures (Ganthadhura)

Studying Meditation Practice (Vipassanadhura)

### **Attaining Phra Dhammakaya**

### **Being Appointed the Abbot of Wat Paknam**

### **Luang Pu's Work and Contribution to Buddhism**

The Discovery of the Meditation Method Which Leads to the Attainment of Phra Dhammakaya

Governing Wat Paknam

Scriptures Study

Propagating Buddhism and Vijja Dhammakaya

Installing Utility Facilities

Building the Kitchen

Recognition and Monastic Titles

### **Obstacles and Struggles**

### **Luang Pu's Illness and Passing**

## **• Luang Pu's Routine and Exemplary Conduct**

### **Monastic Practice**

#### **Luang Pu's Monastic Routine**

Daily Routine

Chanting

Exercising Restraint according to the Patimokkha

Confession of an Offence

Dining together with Resident Monks

Maintaining the Living Standard of All Monastic Residents

Giving Dhamma Lectures

Helping with Human Suffering

Practicing Vijja Dhammakaya

**Luang Pu's Meditation Practice**

Being Resolute

Being Persistent

Practicing According to the Path of Nibbana

Higher Morality (Adhisila)

Gratitude

Seeing Value in the Smallest Things

Frugality

Contentment

Cultured Speech

High Level of Love and Kindness

Humility

**Exemplary Conduct**

**Propagating Vijja Dhammakaya Worldwide**

**Attaining the Uttermost of Dhamma**

**The Heir of Vijja Dhammakaya**

• **The Dhamma Power**

**Right Practice of Vijja Dhammakaya**

Right Concentration

Samma Araham

Cessation Is the Key to Success

## **The Supernatural Powers of Vija Dhammakaya**

The Occurrence of Supernatural Events on Certain Buddhist Holy Days

The Supernatural Powers of Luang Pu's Sacred Gifts

Bomb-Dislocation Strategy

- **The Sangha Power**

Luang Pu's Only Mantra "Cessation"

Healing Illnesses

Overpowering Black Magic

Turning His Face into Gold

Accelerating the Growth of Fruits

Supernormal Insight

Appearing in Dreams

- **Luang Pu's Dhamma Lectures**

Putting Our Life on the Line

Once Your Mind Is Clear and Bright, Money Will Automatically Flow into Your Life.

Dhatudhamma

Heedlessness – Heedfulness

Our Parents' Valuable Words

The Seventh Base of the Body

Cessation and the Center

From Anatta (the Absence of True Selfhood) to Atta (the Presence of True Selfhood)

Alms-Giving Makes the World Go Round

Merit Resides in Every Inner Body

## **Concepts**

The Most Venerable Phramonkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro), the Abbot of Wat Paknam or more frequently referred to as Luang Pu Wat Paknam or just Luang Pu, has a life history that is exemplary from the very beginning through the middle to the very end. He was a perfect monk in that he had studied the Scriptures (Pariyatti), practiced meditation (Patipatti), and attained Supernormal insight (Pativedha). Luang Pu is the epitome of righteous monks, hence, he is highly worthy of our deep reverence. Luang Pu is our refuge. Everything that Luang Pu had done in his life is for the good of humanity as a whole. Luang Pu had unwaveringly pursued Perfections all throughout his life despite all forms of obstacles. The most valuable contribution Luang Pu has made toward Buddhism is the discovery of Vijja Dhammakaya. Vijja Dhammakaya is the very vehicle that can bring inner peace to everyone in the world. Luang Pu's teachings are pure and timeless. Anyone that practices according to Luang Pu's teachings is sure to meet with results beyond expectations. It is for these reasons that Luang Pu is our great Master worthy of our deepest respect.

## **Objectives**

1. To enable the student to learn about Luang Pu's life history, monastic routine, exemplary conduct as well as the contributions he has made to Buddhism, Vijja Dhammakaya, society, the nation, and the world.
2. To enable the student to learn about and practice according to Luang Pu's teachings.

## **Part 1**

### **The Life History of the Most Venerable Phramonkolthepmuni**

**(Sodh Candasaro)**

**The Discoverer of Vija Dhammakaya**

### **His Life History**

#### **Luang Pu's Younger Years**

The Most Venerable Phramonkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro) or more commonly referred to as Luang Pu Wat Paknam was born Sodh on Friday, October 10, B.E. 2427. Luang Pu's birthday coincided with the 6<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> waning moon in the year of the Monkey. He was born in the village of Neuah opposite the Songphinong Temple in Tambon<sup>1</sup> Songphinong, Amphoe Songphinong, in the province of Suphanburi. Luang Pu's father was Mr. Ngern Sae-jew. His mother's name was Soodjai Meekaewnoi. He was born into a merchant family that traded rice along the Songphinong Canal and in nearby Amphoes. He had altogether 5 siblings:

1. Mrs. Da Charoenrueng.
2. The Most Venerable Phramonkolthepmuni (Sodh Meekaewnoi).
3. Mr. Sai Meekaewnoi.
4. Baby Pook Meekaewnoi (He died when he was one year old).
5. Mr. Samruay Meekaewnoi.

#### **As an Infant, Luang Pu Was Supremely Patient**

Luang Pu's mother said that when Luang Pu was born he did not cry at all. Since it is normal for every infant to cry at birth, the family did have some concern initially that the new infant might be mute. But in fact, this extraordinary feat is considered to be one of the signs displayed by all the personages destined to be humanity's teachers because it is a display of supreme patience.

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<sup>1</sup> Thailand is divided into provinces. Each province is made up of Amphoes. Each Amphoe is made up of Tambons.

The reason is that the pain experienced by an infant during the birth process is excruciating. In fact, the pain is said to be so excruciating as to cause a newly born infant to forget all about its previous lives.

In the womb, the fetus has to live in a very confined space under the mother's stomach, above her intestines, and in between her abdomen and spine. The womb is a dark place. The fetus can hardly move its body and has to remain in this confined space for a total of 10 months. Luang Pu's merit and Perfections, which have been accumulated throughout the previous countless lifetimes, had made it possible for him to exercise extreme patience since birth.

### **As an Infant, Luang Pu Had the Wisdom to Teach Himself**

When Luang Pu was an infant and was not yet weaned, his mother would put him in the cradle before she left to sell goods outside the house. She would press some cooked rice into a lump and put it in Luang Pu's mouth so that he could suck on it during her absence. Luang Pu understood everything and reminded himself not to be hungry but to suck on the lump of rice until Mom gets home.

This ability to teach oneself since infancy is another attribute of personages destined to be humanity's teachers.

### **Luang Pu Had a Penchant for Chastity Practice**

When Luang Pu was little, he was cute and cuddly and the girls in the neighborhood loved to hold him and they often planted kisses on his chubby cheeks but this caused the little child to wince. Luang Pu did not want any female outside of his immediate family to touch him ever since he was just a little baby. And he took great care not to let a member of the opposite sex touch him. This trait is the sign that Luang Pu had practiced chastity all throughout his previous existences.

### **Luang Pu Had a Resolute Nature**

Luang Pu had always been resolute and once he decided to do something he would endeavor to get it done and would never quit before it was done. When he was young, he used to help his parents tend to the oxen. If any of the oxen got lost or went home with other people's oxen, he would bring them back however far he had to go and however late at night it might be. He would not return home until he could come home with his lost oxen.

### **Luang Pu Had an Abiding Faith in the Triple Gem**

When Luang Pu was young, he used to help his father with the rice business. One day Luang Pu was on one of their rice boats when it went past a shrine known to be the dwelling of a powerful spirit and people were often seen making food offerings there. Luang Pu said to himself, *“This is not the Triple Gem. And I will never pay respect to anything outside of the Triple Gem.”* One day he was going past the shrine on his boat when suddenly his stomach became quite hard and uncomfortable but he thought *“This is my own problem. I’ll never pay respect or make a food-offering at any shrine. Go ahead and squeeze my stomach. It’ll soon be all better anyway.”* He also had a thought that one day if and when he could attain Enlightenment, he would return to investigate the shrine. It was uncanny that he should think that way because he had no idea at the time how one went about attaining Enlightenment.

### **Luang Pu Was Loving and Kind**

Luang Pu’s older sister<sup>2</sup> once told a story about Luang Pu. She said that when Luang Pu was a child and went with the oxen to till the paddies, he would pay close attention to the sun to see how late it was already in the morning. She used to fault him for being lazy and looking forward to finishing his work. But, actually Luang Pu was following the old belief that it was very unwholesome for farmers to work the oxen until it’s time for the monks’ midday meal (11:00 a.m.). The reasons were that the sun was at its hottest then and the oxen had been working in the paddies since before dawn. Therefore, out of his love and kindness for the animals Luang Pu had no wish to work them past 11:00 a.m. each day.

After Luang Pu stopped working with the oxen, he would take them to the pool and bathe them before he let them loose to graze on fresh grass. He felt good when he could do this for the animals and while he bathed the oxen, he would always sing a song about Nibbana and repeated it over and over again.

*“We’re born to search for gems. If we don’t hold on to them once we’ve found them then why should we be born at all? What we crave is but deception. What tempts us is but falsehood. The things we crave and the things that tempt us make us feel concerned and worried. So stop all desires and cravings and say goodbye to temptations. Hasten to leave sense-desire behind. Continue to follow the Three Aggregates. Finish the sixteen tasks. And we will not experience scarcity but will attain Nibbana instead.”*

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<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Da Charoenrueng.

### **Luang Pu Treated His Subordinates with Generosity**

One day while Luang Pu was selling rice for a living, a young girl came by in her boat to sell snacks. She asked Luang Pu to buy the snacks from her and Luang Pu bought everything she had left in her boat and gave the snacks to his subordinates. Ever since then the girl would always come by to sell her snacks to Luang Pu. This girl's name is Tuam Hutanukrom. Later, she finished nursing school and took up the religious life as a nun.<sup>3</sup> She also undertook Dhutanga in the forest for some time. Much later still, she came to live at Wat Paknam and was in charge of the temple's refectory until the day she passed away.

### **Luang Pu's Schooling**

Luang Pu had helped his parents earn a living ever since he was little and when he was 9 years old his mother sent him to study with his uncle<sup>4</sup> who ordained as a monk at Wat Songphinong. Not long afterward, Luang Pu's uncle went to spend the Rains-Retreat at Wat Huabodhi in Amphoe Songphinong and Luang Pu followed him there to continue his study for about 7 – 8 months longer. From there, Luang Pu's uncle went to reside at Wat Kalayanamitra and disrobed some time later. Luang Pu went on to continue his study at Wat Bangpla<sup>5</sup> in Amphoe Bang Lane in the province of Nakhon Pathom. He studied with the Abbot of Wat Bangpla starting at the age of 11.

Luang Pu could read and write Khom script<sup>6</sup> very well judging from the fact that he could read the book 'Phra Malai'<sup>7</sup> which was written in the Khom script. Luang Pu was a very good student. He spent two years studying at Wat Bangpla before returning home to help his parents sell rice.

### **Luang Pu Worked Hard to Earn Right Livelihood**

About a year after Luang Pu returned home when he was just 14 years old his father passed away. Luang Pu had to take over the rice-selling business which included two large boats and several crew members. The boats made the trip between Songphinong and Bangkok about 2–3 times a month carrying un-husked rice from Songphinong to sell to the rice mills in Bangkok and sometimes to the rice mills in Amphoe Nakornchaisri as well.

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<sup>3</sup> Upasika Tuam Hutanukrom of Wat Paknam.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Na Meekaewnoi.

<sup>5</sup> Bangpla was where Luang Pu's father was born.

<sup>6</sup> Khom script is similar to Pali.

<sup>7</sup> This book gives an account of an Arahat who had visited the Celestial Realm and the Hell Realm. Upon his return to the Human Realm, the Arahat had admonished the people to abstain from misdeeds but to accumulate merit instead.



Luang Pu was quite well off since he was hard-working and he was honest in his business dealings. His business partners found him very trustworthy. For example, after the price of rice had been agreed upon, Luang Pu could load the rice in his boat and sell it before he returned to pay for the rice.

### **Luang Pu Possessed a High Intellect**

Once when Luang Pu went with his crew in his boat to Bangkok, while the boat docked at Bangkoknoi Canal, an employee of Luang Pu's brother-in-law stole money and gold worth about 1,000 bahts from Luang Pu. In those days, one baht can buy 200 bunches of bananas. Luang Pu informed the police about the theft. In the evening four policemen came by in a steam boat to take Luang Pu to the house of the culprit's wife at Canal Twelve. The men went in pursuit of the culprit and arrived near the house of the culprit's wife at dawn. Luang Pu saw the culprit poking his head out from a window at the back of the house and alerted the policemen about the culprit's whereabouts. As soon as the culprit saw the steam boat he jumped out of the house and ran away. By the time the steam boat came to a stop in front of the house, the culprit was nowhere to be seen. Luang Pu noticed the culprit's tracks in the mud and told the policemen to keep watch at the corner of the dike while he followed the tracks made in the mud by the culprit.

When Luang Pu followed the tracks to the middle of the dike, he saw the culprit hiding under the rice straws. As Luang Pu approached the culprit's hiding place, the culprit tried to escape by going under the water but the policemen got to him first. The culprit was handcuffed and brought back to his wife's house so that he could tell the men where he had hidden the stolen money and gold. Having recovered about 900 bahts of the stolen money Luang Pu and the policemen prepared to return to Bangkok. After submitting his testimony to the police, they gave Luang Pu a ride back to his boat in Bangkoknoi.

## **Luang Pu's Ordination**

### **Luang Pu Vowed to Ordain for Life**

After the theft incident, Luang Pu continued to support the family by selling rice until he was 19 years old when something happened that changed the course of his life forever.

Luang Pu and the crew were returning home on an empty vessel after having sold all of the rice, the river current on that night was unusually strong and made it hard to maneuver the boat. The boat finally reached a small canal above Taladmai of the Nakornchaisri River in the province of Nakhon Pathom. This canal was called 'Bang-e-an'<sup>8</sup> and it could be used as

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<sup>8</sup> Its formal name is 'Ladbangtan' and it is located in Amphoe Samphran in the province of Nakhon Pathom.

a shortcut. However, the canal was rarely used by people because it was the haunt of pirates. But that night Luang Pu decided to use the shortcut anyway.

Luang Pu's boat was the only boat on the canal at the time. Soon after the boat was traveling along the canal, Luang Pu was suddenly afraid that the boat might be attacked by pirates. Should they attack, Luang Pu would be the first to be hurt because he was standing at the stern of the boat. He thought, "The current is strong. The canal is narrow. The pirates are mean. And the stern of the boat was at the same level as the bank. This is a very dangerous situation because should any shooting occur, the one standing at the stern will be the first to receive the bullet. If we are attacked now we'll have no way of defending ourselves. I'd better go to station myself at the bow with my gun and let a crew member stay at the stern. This way should we be attacked by pirates, at least we'll have a chance to defend ourselves." Luang Pu then carried a gun loaded with eight bullets and went to stand at the bow while telling a crew member to take the rudder for him.

As Luang Pu punted the boat, a thought occurred to him, "These crew members are paid only 11 – 12 bahts a day but I am the owner of the boat and the business. Were I to allow one of them to die in my place that would be very unethical of me."

Being moved by love and kindness, Luang Pu made the decision, "I own the boat. I own the business. Therefore, I should be the one to die first and allow the crew members to escape with their lives so that they can continue to work and support their families." Luang Pu called the crew member to come back and punted the boat at the bow while he went to stand at the stern with his gun.

The boat continued along the canal without any incident until it reached a place of safety. However, Luang Pu's mind was still dominated by the thought of death. An unusual insight suddenly occurred to him. ***"This business of earning a living is such a difficult one. My father had to do it. I have to do it. All of us have to earn money in our own way and there is no stopping. Whoever doesn't hurry to accumulate material wealth is considered a failure. He gets no respect and no one wants to associate with him. The person himself feels ashamed in public because he is poorer than other people. My ancestors worked hard to earn money and so did my father and now so do I. But where are my ancestors and my father now? They have all been dead and in time I too shall die."***

The thought of death made Luang Pu quake, ***"I will surely die. My father had traveled on this boat and fallen ill. And a few days after he arrived home, he passed away. I was there to help nurse him and I couldn't see that he could take anything with him. My mother, my siblings and I did not go with him, for all of us are still here. My father had to go alone to the hereafter. And I too will have to do the same."***

Luang Pu subsequently lay down on the floor of the boat and pretended to be dead. He wanted to know what death would feel like. He dozed off for a minute and when he came to he got right up and made a resolute wish, *“Please don’t let me die before I can enter the monkhood. And once I ordain, I will ordain for life.”*

### **Luang Pu Eagerly Sought Dhamma Knowledge**

Luang Pu was mindful of the vow from that day onward. He was determined to take up the religious life but could not do it just yet because he had the responsibility of supporting his mother. Therefore, Luang Pu had to work very hard for a few years in order to save up enough money for his mother and his siblings so that he could be relieved of his responsibility and free to enter the monkhood.

Luang Pu finally had the opportunity to enter the monkhood when he was 22 years old. In the eighth lunar month of that year after the boat had been loaded with rice to be sold to the rice mills in Bangkok, Luang Pu told his subordinates to take the boat to Bangkok for him. On his part, Luang Pu went to stay at the temple in order to get ready for his ordination. At the time it was the Venerable Phrapaladyang<sup>9</sup> that helped Luang Pu with learning the Pali words used in requesting ordination. He also helped Luang Pu prepare for the ordination ceremony, and taught him something about the Vinaya (the Discipline).

At the beginning of July, B.E. 2449, Luang Pu ordained at Wat Songphinong which was located in Amphoe Songphinong in the province of Suphanburi. He was given the Pali name ‘Candasaro’. His Preceptor was the Venerable Phra Dee of Wat Pratusarn which was located in Amphoe Mueang in the province of Suphanburi. Luang Pu’s First Ordination Teacher was the Venerable Phrakruvinyanuyok (Nieng Indajoto) and his Religious Instructor was the Venerable Nong Indasuvanno.

Luang Pu had an excellent memory and could easily memorize all of the incantations as well as the Patimokkha. In the first year of his monkhood, Luang Pu carried out the two monastic duties of studying the Scriptures (Ganthadhura) and practicing meditation (Vipassanadhura). Having studied the Scriptures for a while, Luang Pu wanted to know what the term *‘Avijjapaccaya’* meant. This question arose from deep within him and it demanded an answer. Luang Pu had the feeling that this word meant something very important to him. No monks in the temple could give him an answer. Finally, one monk said to Luang Pu, “Nobody translates these words here. If you want to know its meaning, you will have to go and study in Bangkok.” Having heard this, Luang Pu felt motivated to go and study in Bangkok because he was determined to know the meaning of the word.

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<sup>9</sup> He was Luang Pu’s grandfather.

About seven months into the monkhood, Luang Pu went to see his mother to ask her for permission to go to Bangkok. His mother did not really want him to go but had to yield to his wish. Luang Pu asked his mother for 80 bahts to pay for his travel expense. And he was determined never to ask for any money from her again.

Luang Pu went to reside at Wat Phra Chetuphon in Bangkok in order to further his Scriptures study. He also brought along his youngest brother<sup>10</sup> to live with him as his assistant and to give him the opportunity to study Pali grammar as well. Initially, Luang Pu had no books<sup>11</sup> so he asked his older sister to buy them for him.

While studying at Wat Phra Chetuphon, Luang Pu had a very difficult time obtaining alms and hardly received enough food to satiate his hunger. Some days all he received was a tangerine and on other days, he received nothing at all. On one occasion, Luang Pu did not receive any food at all for two whole days. He thought, “I am a monk and I observe the monks’ Precepts. And if I have to starve to death so be it. I would rather go without than to eat another monk’s food. Should I have to die from not receiving any food then the rest of the monks will have an easier time obtaining food after I die, since the news of my death will inspire compassion in the lay people and motivate them to offer food to all the monks.”

On the third day, Luang Pu went on his alms-round and received only one ladle of cooked rice and a banana. When he returned to his kuti, he felt exhausted because he had not eaten for two whole days already. After he contemplated his food, he began to eat it. But, after just one bite, he saw a scrawny dog walk by and it stopped to look at him. Luang Pu could tell that the dog had not eaten for days and he felt moved to share his food with the dog. He threw half of the rice and half of the banana to the dog while he made a resolute wish, ***“By the pious act of sharing my food with this dog, let me never know scarcity ever again.”*** From that day onward and as a result of his act of selflessness on that occasion, Luang Pu’s alms-bowl was always filled to the brim which made it possible for him to share his food with other monks.

With a heart so generous coupled with the enormous difficulty in obtaining food, Luang Pu was concerned that other monks might be having the same difficulty. He thought, “If and when I am able, I will set up a refectory to feed the monks and the novice monks so that they do not have to be concerned about obtaining food and can spend all of their time studying the Dhamma instead.”

Four years after Luang Pu entered the monkhood, he and his brother went to live for a time at Wat Chaiyaperk. One night, Luang Pu dreamt that a man brought him a basket of sand. Luang Pu took only a small amount of the sand but his brother took two handfuls of it. A few days later both of them contracted small pox. Luang Pu had few symptoms but his brother fell gravely ill. As soon as Luang Pu felt better he brought his brother back to Songphinong but

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<sup>10</sup> Mr. Samruay Meekaewnoi.

<sup>11</sup> In those days, books came in the form of palm leaves and were written in the Khmer language.

the brother's condition did not improve and later passed away at the age of 18. After the funeral, Luang Pu returned once again to Wat Phra Chetuphon.

### Studying the Scriptures (Ganthadhura)

Luang Pu devoted his time to the study of Scriptures. And given his high intellect and an excellent memory, Luang Pu was able to complete the study of the Pali grammar, eight sections of the Dhammapada, the Buddhist texts 'Mangalattadhipani' and 'Sarasangaha'.<sup>12</sup> He was an expert in these topics and could teach them to others as well.

In those days, there was not a set course of study for a student monk because each monk could pick and choose to study whatever Dhamma topics he wanted. Luang Pu's love for Dhamma education caused him to carry different texts with him so that he could sit in on other lessons as well. He wanted to be as well-educated as possible. He had carried so many texts with him all the time that his shoulders began to droop.

Luang Pu had to travel to different temples for his study. His normal routine went something like this: After breakfast, He went by boat across the river to study at Wat Arunrajvararam. He returned to Wat Phra Chetuphon for lunch. In the afternoon, he went to study at Wat Mahadhatu. In the evening, he either went to study at Wat Sutat or Wat Samplerm. At night, he studied at Wat Phra Chetuphon. His routine might alter at times.

Despite the difficulty, Luang Pu was determined to study as much and as hard as possible and for many years. At the time, there was a fast food vendor called Mrs. Nuam who lived near Tatieen Market, she had pledged to provide lunch for Luang Pu every day. Years later after Luang Pu became the Abbot of Wat Paknam, he heard that Mrs. Nuam became old and decrepit and she had no one to take care of her. Luang Pu sent for her and she came to live at Wat Paknam until she died. Luang Pu made arrangements for her funeral. Luang Pu said, **"What Upasika Nuam had done for me is a great good deed. When I did not have anything to eat, she provided me with food. When she was poor and destitute, I supported her. When I needed her, she was there for me and when she needed me, I was there for her. This is a great and rare thing."**

Later still, a lady of the royal household at Pra Ong Pen Palace, who had a deep reverence for Luang Pu, came to make him a food-offering daily at Wat Phra Chetuphon. Having been able to obtain enough food to sustain himself, Luang Pu had the time to open a small Pali school by using his kuti as the venue. More than ten monks and novice monks came to learn Pali in Luang Pu's kuti. (In those days, there were several small Pali schools like this at Wat Phra Chetuphon)

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<sup>12</sup> This is the same text as 'Saratthasangaha' which was compiled by Phra Nandajarn. It deals with important information about Buddhism, such as, the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma, the Precepts, alms-giving, the practice of Dhutanga, etc.

The Pali teacher was Phramahapee Vasuttama.<sup>13</sup> He had completed the 5<sup>th</sup> grade of Pali studies. Luang Pu took it upon himself to provide food for the teaching monk. Luang Pu was also one of the students and took the opportunity to review his Pali grammar. However, some time later, Pali studies underwent a change. The Monastic Order had officially formed a new Pali curriculum for the monks and it included Pali grammar. As a result, Wat Phra Chetuphon set up a formal Pali school and the small schools, which included Luang Pu's Pali school were closed down.

### **Studying Meditation Practice (Vipassanadhura)**

Besides Scriptures study, Luang Pu was very interested in learning meditation practice since the first day of his monkhood. His first meditation teacher was the Venerable Phra Noang<sup>14</sup>. Luang Pu studied with this teacher during the first year of his monkhood. In addition, Luang Pu had also read up on meditation practice in various Buddhist texts, but mostly from the text 'Visuddhimagga'. On days that Luang Pu did not study the Scriptures, he would go to see the different monks who were well-known at the time for their meditation practice in an effort to gain more knowledge about the subject.

The names of these venerable monks include:

1. The Venerable Phra Nong Indasuvanno, Luang Pu's Religious Instructor.
2. The Venerable Luang Por Nium at Wat Noi in the province of Suphanburi.
3. The Venerable Phrasanvaranuvong (Eium) at Wat Rajasiddharam in Bangkok.
4. The Venerable Phrakruyanavirat (Po) at Wat Phra Chetuphon in Bangkok.
5. The Venerable Phra Singh at Wat Lakorntum.

There were other teaching monks as well and these included: The Venerable Phramonkoltipmuni (Mui),<sup>15</sup> the Venerable Phra Dee at Wat Pratusarn in Amphoe Mueang in the province of Suphanburi and the Venerable Phra Plerm at Wat Khaoyai in Amphoe Tamaka, in the province of Kanchanaburi.

Luang Pu's earnest and consistent effort had made it possible for him to attain a crystal sphere the size of an egg yolk in the middle of his abdomen when he went to study meditation practice with the Venerable Phra Singh. Luang Pu's teacher felt very pleased with Luang Pu's meditative achievement and wanted him to remain at Wat Lakorntum as a teacher of meditation.

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<sup>13</sup> Phramahapee Vasuttama came to Wat Phra Chetuphon with Somdej Phrabuddhajarn (Khem Dhammasaro) from Wat Mahadhatu.

<sup>14</sup> He was Luang Pu's Religious Instructor during his ordination.

<sup>15</sup> He was the former Abbot of Wat Jakravadd.

However, Luang Pu was convinced that there was much more to meditation practice than that and he wished to study it at a much deeper level.

Moreover, Luang Pu was able to learn meditation practice from the Venerable Phrakruyanavirat of Wat Phra Chetuphon so much to his teacher's satisfaction that he asked Luang Pu to remain at Wat Phra Chetuphon to help teach meditation practice to others, but Luang Pu declined for the same reason as in the case of the Venerable Phra Singh.

Having studied meditation practice from various teaching monks until he could achieve a certain level of meditative attainments, Luang Pu wanted to undertake Dhutanga in order to find a place of solitude in the countryside as soon as he was free from Scriptures study.

When Luang Pu's older sister knew of his intention to undertake Dhutanga, she had an umbrella-like tent made for him. Luang Pu would not accept it from other people. It could be that Luang Pu wanted his sister to receive the great merit derived from his Dhutanga practice. It had been recorded that Luang Pu undertook Dhutanga twice. No details were recorded for the first Dhutanga, but the second Dhutanga took place in the province of Suphanburi.

Luang Pu had met with a myriad of incidents during his Dhutanga and had met many monks that had lived in the forest. Some of whom possessed supernatural powers. When Luang Pu trekked to a forest in the province of Sukhotai, he met a monk there and they had a conversation about meditation practice. This monk told Luang Pu that he used the mantra 'samma araham' during his meditation practice. This was the first time that Luang Pu heard the term '*samma araham*'.

In the second Dhutanga, Luang Pu trekked to the province of Suphanburi. He decided to put up his umbrella-like tent at Wat Phrasriratanamahadhatu because it was a quiet place and not too far from the village. The temple was close to being abandoned but the atmosphere was very conducive to meditation practice. One day he saw a child herd some cattle to graze in the temple grounds and he said to the child, "***Don't let the cattle walk all over this area because there are many Buddha Images buried under this ground or you'll incur grave retribution.***" The cattle herder did not believe Luang Pu, so Luang Pu had him dig around and sure enough many Buddha Images were found there. This incident made the local people believe in Luang Pu's extraordinary virtue.

Luang Pu wanted to repair the damaged Buddha Images in the temple, so he invited the local people to come and help him. In return, Luang Pu taught them meditation practice and as a result, many came to study meditation with him. Luang Pu also told the people about the fruits that can be gained from repairing the Buddha Images. Many people came joyfully to work on the Buddha Images as a result. However, before the repair work could be finished, Luang Pu was summoned back to Wat Phra Chetuphon. The reason was that the governor of Suphanburi and a high-ranking government official of Nakornchaisri had learnt that a large number of people had come to study meditation with Luang Pu and they felt uneasy about the situation fearing that it

might be a cover-up for some sort of a coup. When the official of Nakornchaisri had the opportunity to see the Most Venerable Somdej Phravanarat of Wat Phra Chetuphon who at the time was in charge of the monks in Amphoe Bhasicharoen, he asked the venerable Somdej to summon Luang Pu back to Wat Phra Chetuphon.

Luang Pu respected the monastic governing body and complied by leaving Wat Phrasriratanamahadhatu to go and spend the Rains-Retreat at Wat Songphinong. While at Wat Songphinong, Luang Pu established a school for Dhamma study and invited the local lay people to set up the Education Foundation. After the Rains-Retreat, Luang Pu returned once again to Wat Phra Chetuphon.

After his ordination and before he started his Scriptures study, Luang Pu had set a goal that he would undertake Scriptures study up to the point where he could translate a section of the palm leaf manuscript ‘Mahasatipatthana’ which had been kept at Wat Songphinong. And once he could translate it, he would end his Scriptures study. It turned out that Luang Pu could achieve this in the eleventh year of his monkhood.

Luang Pu had met the Venerable Phra Nok<sup>16</sup> earlier while he was studying the Scriptures at Wat Phra Chetuphon, so Luang Pu took the opportunity then to visit him at Wat Boatbon. The Venerable Phra Nok frequently asked Luang Pu to give a Dhamma lecture in his place. One thing that Luang Pu did routinely when he was at Wat Boatbon was to practice meditation at 2 p.m. in the Upasatha Hall. In those days, the Upasatha Hall was located among many large and lush trees and the area was surrounded by a forest. The place was very quiet. Luang Pu liked the atmosphere at Wat Boatbon and was a regular visitor there.

Once Luang Pu stopped his Scriptures study, he devoted his time to the earnest practice of meditation. At the time, Luang Pu wanted to spend his 12<sup>th</sup> Rains-Retreat at Wat Boatbon in Tambon Bangkuvieng on Bangkoknoi Canal because he wanted to repay the Venerable Choom, the Abbot of Wat Boatbon, for having given him the texts ‘Mulakaccayana’ and ‘Dhammapada’ by giving Dhamma lectures to the monks, the novice monks, the male and female lay devotees that worshipped at Wat Boatbon.

Therefore, Luang Pu bid the Most Venerable Somdej Phraputajarn (Khem), the Abbot of Wat Phra Chetuphon, farewell and went to spend his 12<sup>th</sup> Rains-Retreat at Wat Boatbon. In the middle of the Rains-Retreat, Luang Pu had a thought, ***“I had wanted to ordain since I was 19 years old. I made a vow then that if I survived long enough to ordain I would ordain for life. It has now been 15 years since I gave my vow and I have entered the monkhood for more than a decade already. However, the Truth that the Lord Buddha has known and seen, I have yet been able to attain. Therefore, it is now time for me to practice meditation in earnest.”***

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<sup>16</sup> The Venerable Phra Nok resided in Wat Boatbon during the time that the Venerable Choom was the Abbot. He later became the Abbot of Wat Boatbon.



## Attaining Phra Dhammakaya

On the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 10<sup>th</sup> waxing moon (in B.E. 2460), Luang Pu went into the Upasatha Hall to practice meditation after he returned from his alms-round. It was then some time after 8 a.m. Luang Pu was determined to practice meditation until he heard the midday meal gong. He began practicing meditation by closing his eyes and chanting the mantra ‘samma araham’. As Luang Pu proceeded with his meditation, the pain and numbness gradually increased to the point where he felt as if every bone in his body was about to burst into bits and he started to feel anxious.

“This has never happened to me before. It’s odd that as soon as I made up my mind not to rise until I hear the midday gong, I should experience such an intense level of discomfort and anxiety. Now, all I can think of is when the midday gong is going to sound.” As Luang Pu’s mind became more and more perturbed, he thought about quitting many times. He would have quitted except for the fact that he had already given himself his word. Finally, his mind began to gradually settle, little by little, until it became completely still and the next thing he experienced was a bright crystal sphere the size of an egg-yolk at the center of his body. This inner experience left Luang Pu feeling incredibly refreshed and joyful. It was then that all of the aches and pain in his body evaporated. And he heard the midday gong.

Luang Pu felt happy all day long. He could still ‘see’ with his mind the bright crystal sphere at the center of his body all the time. That evening, after having listened to the chanting of ‘Patimokkha’ together with his fellow monks, Luang Pu went inside the Upasatha Hall once again to practice meditation. He made a vow, ***“My flesh and blood can dry up leaving only skin, tendons, and bones. Once I sit down, I will not rise again from this seat until I can attain the Lord Buddha’s enlightened Knowledge.”*** After Luang Pu made the vow, he prayed to the Lord Buddha,

***“May the Most Exalted One show me compassion and grant me the least and easiest of your enlightened Knowledge. Should my attainment of your enlightened Knowledge bring harm to Buddhism, don’t grant it to me, but if it can benefit Buddhism then please grant it to me and I will spend the rest of my life to staunchly defend the Buddhist Faith.”***

Luang Pu started to get into the half-lotus position when he saw that some ants were creeping up from the cracks in-between the stone slabs that made up the floor. He picked up the gasoline bottle, dipped a finger into it in order to draw a circle around his seat. He did not yet draw half a circle when he realized how he had already vowed never to rise again until he could attain Enlightenment just moments earlier so what was the point in being afraid of being bitten by ants. Luang Pu put the gasoline bottle down and began his meditation. He sat concentrating on the crystal sphere at the center of his body, which he could still ‘see’ since before lunch. As his mind became more and more still, the crystal sphere became clearer and brighter and its

size grew to be the size of the sun. Luang Pu had no idea how to proceed from there because no one he knew had ever had such an inner experience before.

While Luang Pu's mind was concentrating on the crystal sphere, he 'heard' a voice, which arose from the center of the crystal sphere. It said, "**Majjhima patipada.**" Along with hearing the voice, Luang Pu also saw a pinpoint, which sparkled brightly at the center of the crystal sphere. Its brightness far surpassed that of the crystal sphere itself. Luang Pu focused his attention on the bright pinpoint and thought, "**I suppose this is the Middle Way because the pinpoint is exactly at the center of the crystal sphere. I'll keep focusing my attention on it and see what happens.**"

The pinpoint gradually enlarged itself until it was the size of the first crystal sphere. The first crystal sphere had by then disappeared from sight. As Luang Pu concentrated on the second crystal sphere, a third crystal sphere appeared. Each new crystal sphere was clearer and brighter than the former one. Finally, Luang Pu 'saw' the respective Inner Bodies all the way to Phra Dhammakaya. Luang Pu said that Phra Dhammakaya looks like the Buddha Image with a small lotus bloom on top of His raised crown except that Phra Dhammakaya is purer and clearer than any existing Buddha Image he has ever seen. Luang Pu then 'heard' Phra Dhammakaya's voice that said, "Well done." Those words were enough to send Luang Pu into the state of pure bliss. He murmured to himself,

*"Ah! This is indeed very difficult. No wonder it has not been attainable. Perception, memory, the thought process, and cognition must converge together. Cessation brings about extinguishment. Extinguishment brings about birth."*

Vija Dhammakaya, which is authentic and true, is the very means by which each Lord Buddha attains Self-Enlightenment. Vija Dhammakaya is extremely refined and profound. Luang Pu thought about "*Gambhirocayan*<sup>17</sup> ....*The Dhamma is so profound that it cannot be postulated. It is beyond reflection, imagination, and the thought process. As long as we still use our reflection, imagination, and thought process, we can never attain it. We must converge together our reflection, imagination, and thought process so that cessation can be achieved. Cessation brings about extinguishment. Extinguishment brings about birth. No extinguishment, no birth. This phenomenon is authentic and true. This is the gateway. If this experience does not occur, Enlightenment can never be attained.*"

Luang Pu continued to remain immersed in meditation for about 30 minutes longer. He 'saw' in his meditation the image of Wat Bangpla. The image was so vivid that he felt as though he was there in person. The image let Luang Pu know that as difficult as it was, there were people at Wat Bangpla who could attain Phra Dhammakaya.

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<sup>17</sup> Gambhiro cayan dhammo duddaso duranubodho santo panito atakkavacaro nipuno panditvedaniyo  
This truth is profound, difficult to see, difficult to attain. This truth is tranquil. This truth is immaculate. It cannot be postulated or guessed at. It is refined. It is attainable by the sages.

Having discovered Vijja Dhammakaya, Luang Pu had dedicated the rest of his life to practicing and researching Vijja Dhammakaya. The more Luang Pu practiced and researched Vijja Dhammakaya, the more profound he found it to be. Luang Pu studied Vijja Dhammakaya in this manner for a little over a month until the Rains-Retreat ended. After he received the Kathina-Offering, Luang Pu bade the Abbot of Wat Boatbon farewell in order to go and teach Vijja Dhammakaya at Wat Bangpla. It turned out that after four months of teaching, three monks and four householders were able to attain Phra Dhammakaya. The monks' names were the Venerable Phra Sangvan, the Venerable Phra Ban, and the Venerable Phra Auam.

In the 13<sup>th</sup> year of Luang Pu's monkhood, Luang Pu went together with the Venerable Phra Sangvan to reside at Wat Songphinong. There was another monk there who could practice according to Luang Pu's teaching. His name was the Venerable Phra Mok<sup>18</sup>. Later, Luang Pu went to stay at Wat Pratusarn in the province of Suphanburi. This was the temple where Luang Pu's Preceptor had been the Abbot, but he had already passed away. The local people came many times to ask Luang Pu to give them a Dhamma lecture. As a result, Luang Pu decided to give one Dhamma lecture. Given the fact that Luang Pu had the real ability to teach, the people were so delighted with his Dhamma lecture that they asked him to give another one. Luang Pu knew that if he gave another Dhamma lecture, it would cause the then abbot of Wat Pratusarn to feel irritated with him. However, Luang Pu wished to bless the people. Therefore, he decided to give another Dhamma lecture knowing that he would have to leave right afterward. Luang Pu stayed altogether for four months at Wat Pratusarn.

Luang Pu went to fetch the Venerable Phra Mok, the Venerable Phra Plod (Phrabuddhivongsajarn of Wat Benjamaborpit), the Venerable Phra Pon (Phrakrusoponrajavoraviharn of Wat Benjamaborpit, he later disrobed), and the Venerable Phra Hua of Wat Paprerker in Songphinong so that they could further their Scriptures study at Wat Phra Chetuphon.

## **Being Appointed the Abbot of Wat Paknam**

Luang Pu was fond of solitude as could be seen by his undertaking of Dhutanga. But, Luang Pu had always made himself useful wherever he was. His concern for other people coupled with his talents and abilities endeared him to the senior monks. One of these was Luang Pu's teacher, the Most Venerable Phra Dhammapidok (Pueng Tissatattathera) of Wat Phra Chetuphon. At the time, this venerable monk was in charge of governing the monks in Amphoe Bhasicharoen in the province of Thonburi. He saw that Luang Pu had the ability to contribute enormously to Buddhism and appointed Luang Pu the acting Abbot of Wat Paknam in Amphoe Bhasicharoen. Luang Pu was given the title Phrakrusamutananukrom.

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<sup>18</sup> After Luang Pu went to reside at Wat Paknam, he sent this venerable monk to teach meditation practice to the Venerable Phra Ubalikunupamajarn (Jun Sirijunto) of Wat Baromnivad until he could attain Phra Dhammakaya.

A government boat took Luang Pu together with four venerable monks to Wat Paknam. They were accompanied by several venerable monks from Wat Phra Chetuphon. At Wat Paknam, some senior monks and many local people came to welcome Luang Pu and all the venerable monks.

Luang Pu found Wat Paknam in a state of disrepair. In those days, the area was filled with betel-palm groves, areca-palm groves, coconut-palm groves, and rambutan groves. The Dhamma Hall was very old. There were a small kitchen and a few kutis. The kutis stood scattered along the edge of the grove. Each kuti was small, built with teakwood on stilts and could accommodate only one monk. There had been thirteen monks at Wat Paknam originally. They were lax in both Scriptures study and meditation practice and they presented many problems for Luang Pu since his arrival at Wat Paknam. Nonetheless, Luang Pu was determined to restore Wat Paknam to its original glory.

## **Luang Pu's Work and Contribution to Buddhism**

### **The discovery of the meditation method which leads to the attainment of Phra Dhammakaya**

Some time after our Lord Buddha attained complete Nibbana, the number of Ariya individuals had decreased, and so did the number of individuals that had attained *Phra Dhammakaya*. As a result, Vija Dhammakaya as taught by the Lord Buddha had eventually disappeared altogether. What little information about Vija Dhammakaya that had been written in the Buddhist texts was not enough to enable later generation monks to know about left alone practice Vija Dhammakaya. Buddhist scholars of later times eventually interpreted the word 'Dhammakaya' as being just another name of the Lord Buddha.

Luang Pu had always placed a great emphasis on meditation practice and had earnestly studied the Scriptures along with the 40 different meditation methods as recorded in the text 'Visudhimagga'. Luang Pu had also studied meditation practice with many renowned teachers of his time.

Eventually through his dedicated effort and by putting his life on the line, Luang Pu was able to attain Phra Dhammakaya and in the process discover Vija Dhammakaya. Luang Pu discovered the fact that Phra Dhammakaya was the Living Buddha that led our Lord Buddha to attain Self-Enlightenment. It was not until the discovery of Vija Dhammakaya and the teaching of Vija Dhammakaya by Luang Pu that the word 'Dhammakaya' is becoming known once again.

Luang Pu taught that *Phra Dhammakaya is the Living Buddha that leads us to attain Enlightenment and Phra Dhammakaya exists within each and every one of us. Phra Dhammakaya has all of the physical features of the Perfect Man with the addition of a small lotus bloom at the top of His raised crown. He has a bright, crystal clear body.*

When Luang Pu checked the Dhamma knowledge gained through Vijja Dhammakaya practice with the Tripitaka and the Buddhist texts, he found that the knowledge gained by his meditative experience coincided with what had been recorded in the Scriptures. (For example, when the Scriptures used the word ‘see’ in many different places, this word has a literal meaning in that one can truly see whatever phenomenon described in the Scriptures, that is, with the Dhammakaya-Eye. For another example, the Triple Gem which represents the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha can be seen in meditation as bright and crystal clear identities; therefore, testify to their glorious and gemlike quality.)

After Luang Pu started teaching Vijja Dhammakaya, a large number of people were able to attain Phra Dhammakaya. These individuals have therefore borne witness to the existence of Phra Dhammakaya. The word ‘Dhammakaya’ was not of Luang Pu’s own invention because the word appears in several places in the Tripitaka. Moreover, there was a book called ‘Buddharangsritaruksadiyan’ which dealt specifically with the teaching of meditation method that leads to the attainment of Phra Dhammakaya. It talks about Samatha and Vipassana meditation practice during the four eras, namely, the era of Krungsrisattananahute or Viengchan, Krungsriayudhaya, Krungthonburi, and Krunggratanakosin. It was written in the book that this meditation method had been obtained from the 56 Disapamokkha teachers who wrote this meditation method down after the meeting that took place in B.E. 572. This is another piece of evidence to show that the word ‘Dhammakaya’ has been mentioned in connection with meditation practice.

However, Luang Pu discovered Vijja Dhammakaya only after he had attained Phra Dhammakaya and applied the Dhammakaya-Eye to study Vijja Dhammakaya in ever increasing depth. Vijja Dhammakaya which was discovered by Luang Pu had been lost around B.E. 500 or about 2,000 years ago.

Before the discovery of Vijja Dhammakaya by Luang Pu, information about Phra Dhammakaya that appears in the Scriptures had largely remained hidden. What little information that was found could not be readily understood. Luang Pu, however, was confident of Vijja Dhammakaya and knew it to be authentic and true.

The attainment of Phra Dhammakaya and the discovery of Vijja Dhammakaya by Luang Pu bear witness to the Self-Enlightenment of our Lord Buddha and have the real potential to restore our Lord Buddha’s original Teachings to its former glory.

## **The appearances of the word ‘Dhammakaya’**

The word ‘Dhammakaya’ appears in various places both in the Tripitaka and other Buddhist texts.

### **In the Tripitaka, the word ‘Dhammakaya’ appears in four places.**

#### **1. In the Sutantapitaka Dighanikaya Pativagga:**

Tathagatassa hetan vasettha adhvachanan dhammakayo itipi brahmakayo itipi dhammabhuto itipi brahmabhuto itipi...

It means ‘Behold Vasettha, the word Dhammakaya, Brahmakaya, Dhammabhuti, or Brahmabhuti, is the name of the Tathagata.’

#### **2. In the Sutantapitaka Khuddakanikaya Apadana Sobhitavagga No.14:**

Dhammakayanca dipenti kevalan ratanakaran vikopatan na sakkonti ko disava nappasidati...

It means ‘No individuals can ever kill the Buddha who attains the Dhammakaya, and is the sole origin of the Triple Gem. Who then after having seen such a Buddha does not come to believe in Him?’

#### **3. In the Sutantapitaka Khuddakanikaya Apadana Buddhavagga No. 1:**

Bhavanti paccekajina sayambhu mahanta dhamma pahudhammakaya

It means ‘All of the Paccekabuddhas, the great and noble ones, possess great Truth and multitudes of Dhammakayas.’

#### **4. In the Sutantapitaka Khuddakanikaya Apadana Ekuposathavagga No. 2:**

Sanvaddhitoyan sugata rupakayo maya tava anandiyoy dhammakayo mama sanvaddhitoy taya...

It means ‘Most Exalted One, your physical body I’ve raised until fully grown. However, my beloved Phra Dhammakaya, you’ve made fully grown.’

### **The word ‘Dhammakaya’ appears in other Buddhist texts as follows:**

- In the **Commentary** the word appears in 25 places.
- In the **sub-commentary of Vinaya** called ‘Saratthadipani’ in the Pali version, the word appears in six places.
- In the Buddhist text ‘**Visudhimagga**’, the word appears in two places.
- In the Buddhist text ‘**Milindapanha**’, the word appears once.

- In the book ‘**Stone Tablets, Part 3**’, it mentioned that in Stone Tablet No. 54 which was engraved in the Thai and Magadha languages in B.E. 2092, there is one paragraph written about ‘Dhammakaya’.
- In the book ‘**Pathomsombodhikatha**’, it mentions very clearly that the Most Venerable Phra Upagutta ‘sees’ Phra Dhammakaya. That is, he ‘saw’ Phra Dhammakaya with his mind during meditation.
- In the book ‘**Jarerklantong**’, it mentions ‘the height of Phra Dhammakaya’. This mention confirms Luang Pu’s teaching about ‘measuring the dimensions of Phra Dhammakaya’. Currently, the original of this book is on display in the museum of Wat Phra Chetuphonvimonmankalaram rajvoramahaviharn.
- Scriptures in the Mahayana School contains much more information about ‘Dhammakaya’ than the Scriptures in the Thevarada School. Such information renders credence to Luang Pu’s discovery of Vijja Dhammakaya. In the scripture called ‘Srimaladevisihanadasutta’, the Lord Buddha said, “Dhammakaya is the truest and most steadfast. He is pure bliss. He possesses true selfhood. He is genuine ‘Atta’. He is the purest. Whoever sees the Dhammakaya of the Tathagata in this way is said to see correctly indeed.’

The discovery of Vijja Dhammakaya by Luang Pu can be considered Luang Pu’s most important and greatest contribution to Buddhism.

### **Governing Wat Paknam**

When Luang Pu first became the Abbot of Wat Paknam, he said, ***“It is much harder to build good people than a building. Anyone can build a building if he has the fund to do it. However, it is more important to build good people first.”*** As a result, Luang Pu began first to put emphasis on the monks’ and novice monks’ conduct. He wanted every monk and novice monk to follow an acceptable routine by practicing according to the Dhamma-Discipline. Therefore, Luang Pu called a meeting of all the monks and novice monks and he said to them,

“The chief monk of this Amphoe sent me here to govern the temple and make sure that every monastic resident practices according to the Dhamma-Discipline. The temple can flourish only if we can live and work together in harmony and be empathetic toward each other. We may at this point be strangers. I myself feel as though I’ve been left in a strange island with no one to turn to. However, I am sure that when we practice according to the Lord Buddha’s Teachings, our temple can be made to flourish because the Dhamma-Discipline will destroy every bit of misconduct.

Some of us have been in the monkhood for many years already. Therefore, we need to check and see how far we have gotten with our meditation practice; how well we have observed the 227 Precepts. Each of us is well aware of our own conduct. Our conduct is admirable if we have been practicing according to the Dhamma-Discipline. But it is very unfortunate if we have transgressed the Dhamma-Discipline and for that we have only our self to blame.

Have you ever met a monk who has been in the monkhood for decades and still does not possess enough Dhamma knowledge to teach it to others? Such a monk can be said to make use of Buddhism but he cannot contribute to it. He cannot benefit himself or others. Worse, he is tarnishing our Buddhist Faith. Such a monk is like a hermit crab and it begs the question what benefit can such a monk gain from continuing to be a monk and living in a temple?

I've now come to reside at Wat Paknam and I intend to make an effort to practice according to the Dhamma-Discipline and all of you, who have been in the monkhood for many years, are welcome to join me or not, it is up to you. I will not react in any way if you choose not to join me because everyone here must be self-responsible. However, if you choose not to join me then I ask that you do not stand in my way, since I will not stand in yours either. You can go your way and I can go my way. However, all of us here still need to help keep the rules and orders of the temple. I need to be informed of your comings and goings. What happened in the past belongs to the past because I wasn't here yet. Now that I am here, I will certainly perform my duty as abbot."

Eventually, Luang Pu came to be in charge of monks, novice monks, Upasakas, and Upasikas, the total number of which was 1,200. It was not easy to govern these many people especially in such a way that everyone could live together in peace and harmony, but Luang Pu succeeded in doing it. Luang Pu divided the residents and their respective duty into three parts as follows:

1. Scriptures study.
2. Monks, novice monks, and Upasakas.
3. Buddhist nuns.

Luang Pu oversaw the more important activities and assigned able individuals to oversee other activities of less importance. These individuals reported directly to Luang Pu. Luang Pu treated everyone in the temple like his children by practicing 'The Four Noble Sentiments'<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> The Four Noble Sentiments include loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity.



## Scriptures Study

Luang Pu had always valued education. During his residency at Wat Phra Chetuphon, Luang Pu set up a Dhamma school right there in his kuti so that monks, novice monks can study the Scriptures. Luang Pu had this to say about education, **“Education can change a person’s life by elevating it. A well-educated person is poised to gain better and more elaborate things than other people. Education is like a great and inexhaustible treasure trove.”**

When Luang Pu first came to live at Wat Paknam, local children came often to make trouble in the temple grounds. These children did not receive any schooling and came to the temple to shoot birds and fish in the waters. Luang Pu was concerned about these children’s future. He feared that the lack of education would cause these children to grow up as wayward adults. Therefore, Luang Pu decided to establish a school at the temple so that the children could be properly educated and trained.

Luang Pu wanted to fund the school himself, but it turned out that many people wanted to contribute toward the project. Some of these people included the noblewoman Tanpuying Sudhammontri (Kimlai Sujaritkun), Luang Ritnarongrong, certain wealthy people in the Klong Bang Luang district, Mr. Tang Boonyamanop, the wealthy man from Plu Market, Prapiromrachavajarong who lived opposite Wat Paknam, etc. Luang Pu did not charge any tuition fee and the local people sent their children to attend Luang Pu’s school. Altogether three hundred students came to attend Luang Pu’s school. Once the children became educated and trained, the local people came to believe in Luang Pu and were grateful to him. This caused the relationship between Luang Pu and the local people to improve significantly.

Some time later, Luang Pu was appointed acting Abbot of Wat Kunjun and the school was moved to that temple. After the government took charge of the primary education in the country and established schools in various areas, Luang Pu no longer had to take on the responsibility of educating local children.

Luang Pu turned his attention to Scriptures study and encouraged everyone to undertake Scriptures study. He wanted the monks and novice monks to be well-educated. He did not allow them to remain idle. He made sure that they study the Scriptures so that they could learn the Dhamma in detail and knew how to conduct themselves properly as well as teaching the Dhamma to the laity. Luang Pu wanted them to practice meditation as well. He was of the opinion that **“*Scriptures study is like medicated salve whereas meditation practice is like ingested medicine.*”**

In the year B.E. 2490, Wat Paknam was recognized as an official school for Scriptures study. Its principal was the Venerable Phrakrupipatdhammacani. The school taught Pali and Dhammika and provided elementary education as well. Pali studies included Pali grammar all the way to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade in Pali studies. Higher grades of Pali studies could not be offered at the

time because of the lack of qualified teachers. School was held in a temporary wooden structure and there was not enough room for all the monks and novice monks because at the time there were more than 600 resident monks and novice monks at Wat Paknam. Moreover, monks and novice monks from nearby temples also came to attend school at Wat Paknam.

As a result, Luang Pu thought about building a permanent structure for the school.<sup>20</sup> He wanted to build a large and modern school to accommodate a large number of monks and novice monks. He wanted it to be a concrete building having three stories and strengthened with steel. The first and second floors were for Scriptures study whereas the third floor was for meditation practice. Luang Pu wanted this building to have enough room to accommodate 1,000 monks and novice monks.

Luang Pu invited His Excellency Field Marshall P. Piboonsongkram, the then Prime Minister and his wife Tanpuying La-iad Piboonsongkram to lay the foundation stone for the school in B.E. 2493. Construction commenced in the same year. The school was finished and started operating in B.E. 2497. Luang Pu named the building '*Bhavananusondhi School*'. In those days, it was the largest and best equipped Dhamma school.

In the year B.E. 2500, Luang Pu wished to celebrate the completion of the Dhamma school. He wanted to invite 2,500 monks to come and chant sacred incantations, receive food-offering and other requisites. However, Luang Pu fell gravely ill in B.E. 2499 and the celebration never took place.

It was told that initially when Luang Pu began the construction of the school, his followers grew very concerned because there was no money to fund the construction. One day, the Venerables Phrakruvichiendhammakovit<sup>21</sup> and Phrakrupreechayatikit along with eight other monks went to see Luang Pu to inform him of their plan to raise funds for the school. At the time, Luang Pu had already ordered many foundation pillars and they knew that Luang Pu had no money to pay for them. The monks proposed a plan to raise money by going to different temples in the areas of the country where there lived many of Luang Pu's followers to give Dhamma lectures and give out envelopes for donation money.

Luang Pu sat and listened to the monks' proposed plan. Afterward, Luang Pu thanked every monk for their thoughtfulness and said, "It is your duty to study the Scriptures, so be sure to study until you can graduate the 9<sup>th</sup> Level of Pali Studies so that you'll be known throughout the country." Luang Pu added, "I am staying right here at the temple. I will obtain the funds needed to build the school. It will be done. Now remember, I've been able to feed the monks and every temple resident for decades now, why then wouldn't I be able to afford the construction of a school? Besides, you can go around giving Dhamma lectures and asking for

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<sup>20</sup> Luang Pu had talked about building the Scriptures School for at least 20 years.

<sup>21</sup> He was later appointed Abbot of Wat Kuhasawan.

donations for the rest of your lives and you will still never be able to come up with the million bahts needed for the school.”

Luang Pu had no concern at all about obtaining the necessary funds for his school. Neither did he try to obtain them. He continued to go about with his monastic routine as usual. Yet, amazingly enough, when the time came Luang Pu was able to obtain more than enough funds to pay for the building.

Scriptures study has proceeded well at Wat Paknam and the school has produced a large number of graduates in Pali Studies at the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. The Dhamma school at Wat Paknam continues to produce impressive statistics in terms of Dhamma education. A ceremonial fan along with a certificate was bestowed upon the school in B.E. 2526 in recognition of its success as a Dhamma school.

### **Propagating Buddhism and Vijja Dhammakaya**

Luang Pu wished to propagate Vijja Dhammakaya ever since he first attained Phra Dhammakaya. He had always felt a deep compassion for all humanity. Luang Pu was persistent in his effort to teach the Dhamma as can be seen from his monastic routine.

1. Luang Pu led the monks and novice monks in doing morning chanting in the Upasatha Hall. He admonished them twice a day, in the morning and in the evening.
2. On every Buddhist Holy Day and Sunday, Luang Pu gave a Dhamma lecture in the Upasatha Hall.
3. Luang Pu practiced meditation daily and led the monks to practice meditation with him during the day and at night. The Upasikas (nuns) were required to practice meditation as well.
4. Every Thursday at 2 p.m., Luang Pu taught meditation practice to the monks, novice monks, Upasakas, and Upasikas.
5. Luang Pu assigned certain monks to teach the Scriptures.

Luang Pu continued to teach meditation practice at Wat Paknam. Having practiced Vijja Dhammakaya so earnestly, Luang Pu almost never went anywhere outside the temple. As a result of Luang Pu's effort in propagating Vijja Dhammakaya, more than 100,000 people became his followers and out of these people more than 10,000 people were able to attain Phra Dhammakaya. Luang Pu had also sent monks and nuns who had attained Phra Dhammakaya to almost every province of Thailand to teach Vijja Dhammakaya.

Some of these monks included the Venerable Phrabhavanakosalathera (Phra Veera), the Venerable Phra In, the Venerable Phramaha Dr. Tuanchai who was sent to the countryside especially the province of Suphanburi to teach Vijja Dhammakaya when he was a novice monk. These monks had inspired such a deep faith in the laity that many new temples had sprung up as a result. These temples have flourished up until the present time and they include Wat Kaophra which was located in Amphoe Kaoyoi in the province of Petchaburi, Wat Kasemjittaram in the province of Utaradit, Wat Paknamteparam in Amphoe Hatyai in the province of Songkhla, etc. The nuns that were sent to Chiang Mai and many other places to teach Vijja Dhammakaya included Upasika Tongasuk Samdangpun and Upasika Tien. Upasika Tien later returned to teach in Bangkok. Upasika Yanee taught Vijja Dhammakaya to the people that lived near Wat Paknam. Upasika Jintana taught Vijja Dhammakaya in the province of Suphanburi. Upasika Taveeporn went to teach Vijja Dhammakaya in the province of Chachoengsao, etc.

The Monks, novice monks, nuns, and female lay devotees who were recognized as expert practitioners of Vijja Dhammakaya had helped Luang Pu research Vijja Dhammakaya in greater and greater depth each day for a total of 28 years. It was Luang Pu's wish that they researched Vijja Dhammakaya all the time. Luang Pu said to the monks and novice monks under him, "All of you must try to attain Phra Dhammakaya first so that I can teach you Vijja Dhammakaya. Vijja Dhammakaya is so profound that I can continue to teach it for 20 years and there will still be much more to teach you."

### **Installing Utility Facilities**

Although building good people and practicing meditation were Luang Pu's chief concerns, Luang Pu also launched a few construction projects which included:

1. A two-storied building which was used to house the monks. The upper floor was made of wood and the lower floor was made of brick and concrete.
2. The school for Scriptures study named 'Phrapariyatdhammabhavananusondhi': It was a concrete building strengthened with steel. It had three stories and is 10.5 meters wide and 59 meters long. It was equipped with everything needed for teaching and learning the Scriptures. The construction cost for the school was 2,598,110.39 bahts.
3. The refectory: This building could accommodate 500 monks and novice monks. It was a wooden structure with a zinc roof and a concrete floor. Inside there were rows of raised platforms with a walkway in between them. The construction cost was 400,000 bahts.

4. Monkolchandasara Building: It was a two-storied dormitory made of concrete strengthened with steel with a drop ceiling made of teakwood. It was painted and coated with Shellac. There were bathrooms and toilets within the building. The building was supplied with electricity. It was considered a very modern building in those days. The construction cost was 800,000 bahts.
5. Bavarathepmuni Building: It was a three-storied building made of concrete and strengthened with steel. The construction cost was 327,843.30 bahts.
6. Huts to accommodate lay devotees that came to study and practice meditation.
7. Other facilities that are still in use today.

### **Building the Kitchen**

Luang Pu had a kitchen built as soon as he took over the responsibility of the Abbot of Wat Paknam. Luang Pu did not want the increasing number of monks and novice monks at the temple to have to be concerned about obtaining enough food to sustain themselves and he wanted them to have all the time and energy needed to study the Scriptures and practice meditation. The number of monks that Luang Pu provided meals for started from 20 to 30 monks to more than 600 monks. In the beginning, Luang Pu had his older sister bring rice from their home in Songphinong to the temple every month and the rice needed each month was more than 15 bins. Each bin contains 20 liters of rice. It cost Luang Pu more than 150 bahts a month for food and the cost of food kept increasing all the time. Yet, Luang Pu managed to provide food for everyone in the temple which when including the nuns and other temple residents totaling 1,200 individuals until his very last day. The merit earned from having shared his meager amount of food with one scrawny dog once so long ago and from having provided food for the monks, novice monks, nuns, and the rest of the temple residents for years, has made it possible for so many lay people to make donations at the temple daily. These lay devotees have had to wait their turn to host the daily food-offering at the temple.

Although Luang Pu has now passed away for many years already, there are still many lay people today that come to host the daily food-offering at Wat Paknam. Luang Pu ordered his followers to keep his body at Wat Paknam so that everyone at Wat Paknam could continue to be provided for even after he was gone. When Luang Pu passed away, the temple had only 700 bahts left because every baht had been spent on feeding everyone at the temple. As a result, the Most Venerable Phrarajmoli decided to go to the upper room of the building where Luang Pu's body was being kept. There, he told Luang Pu that the temple was nearly out of money and there were only 700 bahts left. Right after he paid homage to Luang Pu's body and left the building, the venerable monk saw two trucks driving into the temple grounds. Both of them were filled with sacks of rice. Since that day, the number of donators at Wat Paknam has only increased.

During Luang Pu's time, the kitchen was originally a wooden structure with a thatched roof. More than 100 nuns used to work in the kitchen. The kitchen was later relocated a few times but in the end it returned to its original site just as had previously been assigned by Luang Pu. Monks had their meals in small groups on the raised platform and everything was arranged according to Luang Pu's instruction. Glasses, tea kettles, spittoons, etc., had to be arranged just right and so. Luang Pu told the nuns to be meticulous when arranging the dining table for the monks, since in so doing they could earn enormous merit. The monks ate quietly because Luang Pu forbade conversations during mealtimes.

The nun in charge of the kitchen during Luang Pu's time was Upasika Tuam Hutanukrom. She would usually go grocery shopping in her rowboat accompanied by another nun, Upasika Jintana Osot. The latter would do the rowing and they would do their shopping at Wat Klang (Wat Chandraram) which was not too far away from Plu Market. When Upasika Tuam needed to do a major shopping, she would go all the way to Tatian. After B.E. 2505, there were roads leading into Wat Paknam and grocery shopping was done by car instead which was a lot more convenient.

### **Recognition and Monastic Titles**

Wat Paknam was initially quite dilapidated and the monks and novice monks that had been there originally were lax in the Dhamma-Discipline. They were not educated in the Dhamma. Existing buildings had been neglected and were in a terrible shape.

During Luang Pu's tenure as abbot, he had restored Wat Paknam to its original glory and much more. The monks and novice monks at Wat Paknam practiced according to the Dhamma-Discipline and their conduct was admirable. They studied both the Scriptures and meditation practice. Luang Pu added new buildings and restored old ones making Wat Paknam a truly suitable place for making merit and propagating the Lord Buddha's Teachings.

As a result of Luang Pu's innumerable accomplishments and contributions to Buddhism, he had been recognized and given the following monastic titles:

- B.E. 2464 Phrakrusamanadhamsamatan
- B.E. 2492 Phrabhavanakosolthera
- B.E. 2494 Luang Pu received the Ceremonial Fan in Pali Studies
- B.E. 2498 Phramonkolrajmuni
- B.E. 2500 Phramonkolthepmuni

## Obstacles and Struggles

When Luang Pu first went to live at Wat Paknam, his leadership was severely tested by the monks and novice monks that had been there originally. As Luang Pu started to impose rules and orders to put right the wayward and lax monks and novice monks, the impact was felt by the chief monk of Tambon Bhasicharoen. The local people also turned against Luang Pu. They tried to ruin Luang Pu's reputation by deliberately spreading lies about him. Moreover, they tried to poison him and shoot him as well.

On one occasion, Luang Pu assigned the Venerable Phra Kamon<sup>22</sup> to give a Dhamma lecture about meditation practice. Luang Pu attended the lecture which ended at 8 p.m. After the lecture, Luang Pu was on his way back to his kuti, as he passed by the Study Hall, two gun shots rang out. The bullets pierced through Luang Pu's robe and put two holes into it before striking Mr. Prom, Luang Pu's attendant, in the cheek and caused him to sustain a severe injury. However, Luang Pu was completely unharmed. This miracle occurred as a result of Luang Pu's immaculate observation of the 227 Precepts coupled with the supernormal powers derived from his Vijja Dhammakaya. This incident served to greatly increase Luang Pu's reputation. Luang Pu considered the assassination attempt a way to increase his merit and Perfections. Luang Pu's motto was, ***“Monks like us must never fight nor flee and we will be triumphant every time.”***

Luang Pu also encountered another problem in the form of the chief monk of Tambon Bhasicharoen. The chief monk had forbidden Luang Pu to display supernatural powers for fear that he might outshine the monks in other temples in the same Tambon. Luang Pu, however, paid him no attention because Luang Pu wanted to continue making progress in his meditation practice which was contributing enormously to Buddhists and Buddhism.

In regards to Vijja Dhammakaya, initially there were ignorant individuals that accused Luang Pu of coining the word 'Dhammakaya' himself. Some accused him of pretending to have supernatural powers. Others made such contemptuous remarks like, “If you want to be an Asurakaya<sup>23</sup> then go and study Vijja Dhammakaya at Wat Paknam.” Whenever Luang Pu heard about any of these derogative comments, he would just smile. He never reacted in anyway. He would say, ***“What a pity! They talk in ignorance when they say that I invented the word.”*** Or he would say, ***“It's such a simple thing. Why should anyone have cause for alarm? Dhammakaya is real. And this reality will make Wat Paknam stand out. You just watch and see.”***

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<sup>22</sup> Phra Kamon was one of Luang Pu's pupils and was good at giving Dhamma lectures. He also achieved a certain level of meditative attainments. Later Luang Pu sent him to teach Vijja Dhammakaya in the province of Petchaburi. There, He passed away after a few years.

<sup>23</sup> Asurakayas are a race of beings that belong to the States of Unhappiness. They have hideous and deformed bodies and suffer constant thirst pangs.

On one occasion, Luang Pu said to the Most Venerable Somdej Phra Vanarata<sup>24</sup> of Wat Phra Chetuphon in regards to being personally attacked because of Vijja Dhammakaya, *“A person such as me is hardly lacking in wisdom. I know what is wholesome. I know what is unwholesome. Why should I kill myself just for worldly ambitions? These people say things about me. Some of them don’t know the word ‘Dhammakaya’. They don’t know where Dhammakaya is and who Dhammakaya is. They use their ignorance to falsely accuse me. But, I am a monk that has mindfully practiced righteousness since I entered the monkhood. When an ignorant person finds fault with me his ignorance cannot do away with the Truth contained in the Lord Buddha’s Teachings. The Truth may be temporarily hidden, but soon enough the light of Buddhism as reflected in the crystal sphere will shine forth to allow wise practitioners to see it with his own eyes.*

*They can talk about me that way because of what I’ve been practicing here. It just goes to show that the monastic members at Wat Paknam do not just eat and sleep, but we practice meditation earnestly. Their talks only serve to spread the reputation of our temple. It’s more effective than advertising our temple in the newspaper. They talk of their own volition. I didn’t have to hire them to do it. If these people can say bad things about me, then there must be other people who can say good things about me.*

*Good must always win over bad. I am not at all concerned because Dhammakaya is real. Dhammakaya is true. Dhammakaya is not artificial or fake. Dhammakaya will appear as an authentic experience to those who have attained Phra Dhammakaya. I am not at all concerned about this. I have faith in the virtue of Buddhism.”*

Luang Pu had a motto, *“Fragrant flowers have no need for added perfume, they are fragrant on their own and they cannot be stopped from exuding their fragrance. Carcasses have no need for added stink; they cannot be stopped from exuding their malodor.”* In other words, what Luang Pu was doing could be compared to fragrant flowers. His action exuded fragrance and his good reputation could only spread far and wide. When people heard about him and came to see for themselves what Vijja Dhammakaya was all about, they too would know the fragrance of Vijja Dhammakaya once they make the effort to practice it.

Luang Pu quoted the Pali Scriptures in his defense as follows:

*Yo kho Vakkali dhamman so man passati*

*Behold, Vakkali, whoever sees the Dhamma is said to have seen me the Tathagata.*

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<sup>24</sup> His Holiness, the Supreme Patriarch (Pun Punnasiri).



Luang Pu also quoted from the Pali Scripture in the Agganna Sutta of the Suttantapitaka, Diganikaya, Pativagga where the Lord Buddha said to the novice monk, Settha,

*Tathagatassa hetan vasettha adhvaccanan dhammakayo itipi...*

*Behold, Vasettha, this word Dhammakaya is truly the name of the Tathagata.*

Combining the above two quotes, we have the following:

*Whoever sees the Dhamma sees me. It means that whoever sees the Dhammakaya sees me the Tathagata. Or to put it simply, whoever sees the Dhammakaya sees the Lord Buddha.*

Why did the Lord Buddha make such a comment to Phra Vakkali when Phra Vakkali was right there near Him and could clearly see Him with his eyes? It can be explained that what the Lord Buddha meant is that the physical eyes see only the shell of His person which is the body of Phra Siddhattha. This physical body is not the **'I'** (the Tathagata). He also said that this body undergoes decay; that is, the body of Phra Siddhattha is the *external body*.

The word **'I'** here means the *Inner Body* which is not the body that undergoes decay. But, what is this Inner Body then? This Inner Body is the *'Dhammakaya'*. When we can attain Phra Dhammakaya, we are 'seeing' with the *Dhammakaya-Eye* which is not the *physical eye*. The Lord Buddha's words in this quote are indeed very puzzling and they have a profound implication. It is only after one has attained Phra Dhammakaya that one can solve this puzzle.

## **Luang Pu's Illness and Passing**

Ever since Luang Pu took over the responsibility as the Abbot of Wat Paknam, he had had to work extremely hard. Luang Pu had had very little time for sleep because he spent all of his time practicing Vijja Dhammakaya and managing the temple. As Luang Pu advanced in years, his health began to suffer. Luang Pu started to have symptoms of high blood pressure in March of B.E. 2499. Luang Pu's personal physician was the Director of Sailors' Hospital and his name was Vice Rear Admiral Rieng Vipattipoomprated. Whenever a new diagnosis was made, a specialist in the field would be invited to join him in treating Luang Pu.

When Luang Pu first became ill, he held a meeting in the old hall where every temple resident attended. At the meeting, Luang Pu asked each resident to host the monks' meals one day a year by recruiting the help of relatives and friends so that there would be someone to host the monks' meals every day of the year. At the time, the Venerable Phrakrupanyapirat thought that Luang Pu was going to foretell his passing, so he entreated Luang Pu to continue living for a long,

long time to come. Luang Pu had essentially started the tradition of the daily hosting of the monks' meals in that meeting.

While Luang Pu was taken ill, he received a new monastic title of Phramonkthepmuni. In spite of his illness, Luang Pu went in person to the palace to receive the royal certificate of appointment.

Luang Pu had his mother come to live at Wat Paknam when she got older and took good care of her. He built for her a place to live and made sure that she lived comfortably for the rest of her life. In B.E. 2484 at the age of 82, Luang Pu's mother became ill and passed away. Luang Pu had kept her body until B.E. 2500 before he had it cremated. Despite his ill health, Luang Pu attended his mother's cremation.

Luang Pu had a hernia operation some time earlier. He was also admitted to the Sangha Hospital twice. Luang Pu continued to teach and practice meditation as usual. Every day there were always monks practicing meditation near Luang Pu.

Despite his illness, Luang Pu refused to let anyone help him sit up, stand, walk, or take a shower. He never complained or found faults with anyone. He ate whatever food was offered him and did not eat what was considered bad for his illness.

The monk in charge of Luang Pu's food during his illness was the Most Venerable Phrarajmoli (who held the posts of academic secretariat and Luang Pu's personal secretary). The venerable monk posted a monk or novice monk to keep a two-hour watch on Luang Pu all day and all night long. Whoever was keeping watch had to record Luang Pu's condition in details so that the record could be submitted to the attending physician. There were many monks and novice monks who took care of Luang Pu and they included the Venerable Phrakru-samanadhammasamadan or Luang Por Lek, the Venerable Phrakru-upatumdhammakij (when he was a novice monk), the Venerable Phrakrupaladtanom, the Venerable Phra Pair, the Venerable Phramahindra, the Venerable Phra Jai, the Venerable Phra Nori, the Venerable Phrakru-opadsamadhikun, the Venerable Phramahamanit, the Venerable Phrakruvinaitornsongkiet, and the Venerable Phra Sanan. Some of Luang Pu's relatives also came to take care of him. These included Mr. Glare, Mr. Ban, Mr. Yong, Mr. La-ong, Mr. Chalom Meekaewnoi, and Mr. Charern Charernrueng.<sup>25</sup>

Ever since Luang Pu was taken ill, the Most Venerable Somdej Pa<sup>26</sup> had come to visit Luang Pu often. Some days he came in the morning. On other days, he came in the afternoon. On yet other days, he came in the evening. He also came to make sure that the monks and novice monks were taking good care of Luang Pu. One day Somdej Pa came to visit Luang Pu.

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<sup>25</sup> As told by Mr. Chalom Meekaewnoi, Luang Pu's nephew.

<sup>26</sup> His Holiness, the Supreme Patriarch (Pune Punnasiri) at the time his monastic title was Phradhamvarodom.

Luang Pu had already told the novice monks to form a line to welcome him. When Somdej Pa arrived at Luang Pu's kuti, the monk on duty came out to inform Somdej Pa that Luang Pu had been waiting for him for a long while already. Somdej Pa said, "I've never told anyone of my visit. Have you told Luang Pu that I was coming?" The monk said, "I did not, but Luang Pu told me earlier to make preparation to welcome you. Luang Pu said, "Get the place ready, Dhammadilok is coming." Luang Pu was never wrong about the venerable monk's visit. If at certain times, Somdej Pa had been absent for a while Luang Pu would just say, "Dhammadilok of Wat Bodhi is not around."

Luang Pu told Somdej Pa about his illness, "***I will not recover from this illness. There's no medicine to treat it. The medication I've been taking cannot treat it.***" He said that his past negative Kamma was preventing his illness from being treated. It was as if a stone slab was blocking the way and preventing the medicine from reaching the target site. His illness was beyond cure, but when his followers brought reputable physicians to treat him, Luang Pu did not object. He wished to allow his followers to show him their gratitude.

When Luang Pu fell gravely ill, he had Luang Por Lek fetched. He told Luang Por Lek to continue propagating Vijja Dhammakaya and distributing the sacred gifts. Moreover, Luang Pu told Luang Por Lek to keep his body as it is after he dies and not to cremate it.

Before Luang Pu passed away, he told many of his Dhammakaya pupils to continue propagating Vijja Dhammakaya. He told them not to leave Wat Paknam, but to remain there to teach Vijja Dhammakaya and wait for the arrival of the rightful heir of Vijja Dhammakaya.

Around 1 p.m. on the day that Luang Pu passed away, he was having difficulty breathing. Luang Pu's personal physician was not available; therefore, the noblewoman Kunying Chonlakantapinit, who was there to tend to Luang Pu, went to fetch another physician for Luang Pu. After examining Luang Pu, the physician told everyone there that Luang Pu could not feel anything anymore because he had had a hemorrhagic stroke. Luang Pu was beyond treatment. All of the monks and novice monks in the room could only watch Luang Pu with deep sadness.

Luang Pu passed away quietly at Wat Paknam on February 3, B.E. 2502 at 3.05 p.m. He had lived for a total of 74 years, 3 months, and 24 days. He had been in the monkhood for 53 years. The temple bell and the temple gong sounded and everyone in the temple shed tears of sorrow.

## **Luang Pu's Routine and Exemplary Conduct**

### **Monastic Practice**

#### **Luang Pu's Monastic Routine**

##### **Daily Routine**

Luang Pu had many responsibilities and he worked so hard that he hardly had time to rest. Normally, Luang Pu was up around 3 or 4 a.m. He practiced meditation as soon as he was awake. After meditation, Luang Pu would walk around the temple grounds in the company of Mr. Prayoon Suntra. The breakfast bell would sound at 6 a.m. Luang Pu was the first monk to arrive at the refectory. He sat in his usual place to wait for the other monks and novice monks to file in. Every monk ate together at the refectory. Regardless of the number of people who came to offer food as alms at the temple, it could be as few as one, Luang Pu would always give a Dhamma lecture about the fruit of alms-giving and how the alms-giver(s) could earn enormous merit from his act of generosity. Luang Pu always ended the lecture by teaching the alms-giver(s) to keep his mind still. Afterward, Luang Pu would calculate the exact amount of merit earned and let the alms-giver know. Regardless of the level of understanding, every alms-giver felt very joyous to learn that they had earned such great merit from their alms-giving. After the Dhamma lecture, the alms-giver would offer Luang Pu a triple-robe set. After Luang Pu had a shower and changed into a new robe, the alms-giver would dunk his hands into the water that had been left over from Luang Pu's shower and smooth the wet hands over his head because such water was regarded as sacred.

On days that many different dishes were offered, Luang Pu would take a spoonful from each dish and the lay people would eagerly wait to eat the leftover from Luang Pu. If there was still any leftover afterward, Luang Pu would ask the lay bursar to take care of it. After breakfast, Luang Pu would lead the monks and novice monks out of the refectory in an orderly line to the Upasatha Hall where Luang Pu led the group to do morning chanting. After the morning chanting, Luang Pu would spend another thirty minutes admonishing the group. Afterward, everyone would practice meditation together for a while. Luang Pu conducted a roll call in the Upasatha Hall as well. Absence was allowed only for those who had already asked for permission beforehand. At 8 a.m. Luang Pu and the group left the Upasatha Hall. Luang Pu would spend some time receiving visitors if there were any or practice meditation until 10.30 a.m. Luang Pu would receive visitors at 10.30 or continue to practice meditation until 11.00 a.m.

Lunch was usually over by 12.30 after which Luang Pu would practice meditation. He would receive visitors again around 2 p.m. At 5 p.m., Luang Pu would go into the Vijja Dhammakaya Workshop. Every practitioner of Vijja Dhammakaya had to be present in order to listen to Luang Pu's instruction. Luang Pu was very strict. Practitioners were allowed outside the workshop only for brief periods at a time and talking was not allowed. Every practitioner had to keep their minds on Vijja Dhammakaya alone, since their main task was to study and research Vijja Dhammakaya. At 7 p.m., Luang Pu would give another instruction. However, during the period that the Upasatha Hall was used to study and research Vijja Dhammakaya, Luang Pu would teach meditation practice to the monks, novice monks, and the lay people at the Upasatha Hall at 7 p.m.

Luang Pu gave a Dhamma lecture to the monks and novice monks every day after the morning chanting. For the nuns, Luang Pu would find time to teach them on Sundays and Buddhist holy days. Luang Pu would have the lay people pledge the Five Precepts on Sundays and the Eight Precepts on Buddhist holy days. On Thursdays at 2 p.m., Luang Pu would teach the lay people to practice meditation. During the Rains-Retreat, many lay people flocked to the temple and Luang Pu would give a Dhamma lecture daily. When he was giving a Dhamma lecture if too few monks attended, Luang Pu would say, "Today, the monks lose to the nuns," and he would refuse to give a Dhamma lecture. One of the monks at the hall would have to go and fetch the rest of the monks until the Upasatha Hall was full. When Luang Pu was giving a Dhamma lecture if anyone used the pestle and mortar to grind the betel nut, Luang Pu would stop teaching and wait until the noise stopped before he resumed his lecture. And if anyone made noise during meditation practice, Luang Pu would say, "***You'll be deaf because you're disturbing those who are practicing meditation.***" Most importantly, Luang Pu knew every follower's thought during his lecture and could say things that had direct relevance to each particular person.

## **Chanting**

Luang Pu was an excellent role model in monastic routine practice. Luang Pu did morning and evening chanting every day from the day that he entered the monkhood. As the Abbot of Wat Paknam, Luang Pu led the monks and novice monks in doing morning and evening chanting every day at the Upasatha Hall. He also admonished the monks and novice monks to practice according to the Dhamma-Discipline.

Chanting is one way to perpetuate Buddhism, since it preserves the Lord Buddha's Teachings. Chanting is one sign that says Buddhism is still flourishing and when monks chant together regularly, it is an indication that there is harmony among them. There is a saying, "***Any temple that still rings with the sound of daily chanting will continue to flourish and be a refuge to the laity for a long, long time to come. We chant in order to review and***

*pay attention to the Lord Buddha's sayings, the Pali words, the Commentary or in short the Tripitaka. As long as the Pali language is still around, it means that the Scriptures are still intact."*

### **Exercising Restraint According to the Patimokkha<sup>27</sup>**

Luang Pu exercised great care in observing the Fundamental Precepts of the Buddhist monks. He said, *"In regards to depravity, I won't let it touch even the tip of my hair. Depravity is like excrement. When it touches the tip of the hair, it can contaminate the whole head and cause it to stink. It is for this reason that every monk and novice monk must practice according to the Discipline (Vinaya) and take care never to stray from it."*

Every two weeks, Luang Pu would go to the Upasatha Hall along with the rest of the monks to listen to the chanting of the Patimokkha. Luang Pu was especially careful when it came to women. Given the fact that many of Luang Pu's pupils were nuns and female devotees, Luang Pu had to exercise great care and always made sure that he had a monk, a novice monk, or the temple bursar with him. There was a monk stationed outside his bedroom as well.

At Wat Paknam, nuns and female devotees lived in a separate and fenced area. Several women shared one large bedroom and they were overseen by a female supervisor. Monks or novice monks and Upasikas were not allowed to see or communicate with each other. If work necessitates direct communication between a monk and a nun or a woman, permission had first to be sought and chaperons had to be provided.

### **Confession of an Offence**

Luang Pu would say at the beginning of each meditation session, "Meditation practice requires the practitioner's mind to be free of worries and concerns because when the mind is overly concerned or worried about anything, it cannot attain a stable meditative state. Therefore, if you choose to practice meditation, you must leave behind all of your concerns be they large or small."

Luang Pu taught the monks, novice monks, male and female lay devotees to free themselves of concerns by keeping their body, word, and mind clean and pure. Luang Pu taught them to follow the way of Ariya or holy individuals. Luang Pu said, "It is fitting for an Ariya individual to be courageous and bold in doing wholesome deeds, in being honest, in being willing to learn, in being gentle, in being devoid of pride, in being content, in being easy to provide for, in having few obligations, in behaving in such a way that the body and mind are light, tranquil, and wise, in being heedful, in not being involved in family matters."

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<sup>27</sup> The Patimokkha is the fundamental Precepts of the Buddhist monks and consists of 227 Precepts.

Luang Pu took care to remove concerns from his mind by observing the Precepts<sup>28</sup> immaculately and by confessing an offence daily. Confessing an offence is the way for a Buddhist monk to observe the Precepts immaculately because it serves to remind the monk of his monkhood and the need to continue improving himself. Luang Pu confessed an offence to the venerable monk who was his personal assistant every dawn without fail.

### **Dining Together with the Resident Monks**

Luang Pu had the refectory built because it was Luang Pu's intention to facilitate the monks and novice monks' study of Scriptures and meditation practice. Luang Pu made it a point to dine together with the monks and novice monks in the morning and at 11 a.m. everyday unless he had some pressing monastic obligation to fulfill elsewhere. Every monk and novice monk had to be present before the meal could begin. Monks and novice monks that were ill also had to come and have their meal at the refectory. When Luang Pu was having his meal, he would make sure that every monk and novice monk had already finished eating first before he would stop eating. This way every monk and novice monk could then chant the words of blessing together<sup>29</sup>.

It was Luang Pu's opinion that the monks and novice monks that dined together in the same place every day would feel a sense of belonging that fostered consideration and goodwill for each other. Luang Pu felt that the monks that lived and worked together in harmony could truly contribute to Buddhism and be an inspiration to the laity. Believers would be inspired to develop a deeper faith whereas non-believers would come to believe in Buddhism.

Luang Pu also scheduled the monks, novice monks, and nuns to have their heads shaved on the same day. It was Luang Pu's opinion that *"If the heads cannot be harmonious, how can the minds be?"* Luang Pu would often cite the Jataka story about a weaverbird that left its flock by way of teaching about harmony and unity.

### **Maintaining the Living Standard of Monastic Residents**

Luang Pu once made a comment in the Upasatha Hall, "The monks that have not yet arrived, let them come. The monks that are already here, may they live happily." Ever since then more and more monks and novice monks had come to Wat Paknam to study Scriptures and meditation practice. The increased number of resident monks and novice monks did not at all cause Luang Pu to be concerned. Luang Pu was only too delighted to see them come to Wat Paknam and he would like to see their number increase. Luang Pu said that they had come to live under his patronage; therefore, he would never refuse them and would do his best to provide for them.

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<sup>28</sup> A Buddhist monk observes altogether 227 Precepts.

<sup>29</sup> Monks routinely recite words of blessing for the benefit of the lay people that offer them food and other necessities.

Luang Pu was loving and kind to every temple resident. He made sure that they could live happily at Wat Paknam. He praised those who excelled and set them up as good examples. He admonished those that had done wrong. Luang Pu treated the monks and novice monks as if they were his own sons. Luang Pu said, “Whatever a monk or novice monk needs, the abbot will provide for him. The electric bill at Wat Paknam is more than 2,000 bahts per month (around B.E. 2480 – 2490). Yet, the abbot still provides for everyone. Here, we don’t have the triple robe sets for sale, but we give them out for free.

At Wat Paknam, whatever has been given to the abbot is not too good for the monks or novice monks. The abbot shares everything he has with the monks and novice monks so that they can live happily just like they are still living at home with their parents. All parents love their children and when they know how well their children live under the abbot’s patronage, they will in turn come to respect the abbot.”

Luang Pu gave away requisites to the point that at times he had to give a monk an I.O.U because he did not have any to give just yet. Luang Pu said, “Whatever anyone wants will be given him so that every existing item at the temple is utilized.” Luang Pu taught the monks and novice monks, “Wherever you are, you must give alms regularly. If you don’t give anything, at least teach the Dhamma to the laity.”

Luang Pu patrolled the temple grounds every night especially when it rained. Luang Pu said that there are two kinds of people that like the night and the rain: Criminals and womanizers. Luang Pu would check to make sure that no one under his care sneaked out of the temple to engage in unwholesome deeds at night. He would patrol the monks’ and novice monks’ dormitories. He would be pleased if the light in any room was on and there was the sound of recitation coming out of it. However, if the light in any room was still on and the sound of conversation could be heard, Luang Pu would knock on its door to remind the residents to turn off the light.

The Venerable Phrakruvichienkovit, the Abbot of Wat Kuhaswan told us, “One night when Luang Pu was patrolling the temple grounds as was his usual routine; he was passing a monk’s room when he saw that there was light emanating from the room and he heard the sound of people chatting. Luang Pu knocked on the door to let the occupants know that it was time to turn off the light and get some rest. One of the monks said loudly, “You go on ahead, I’ll give you some merit tomorrow.”<sup>30</sup> Luang Pu said nothing and continued with his patrol. The next morning, after the monks and novice monks were done with the morning chanting, it was time for Luang Pu to admonish the group. This was also the time that Luang Pu would mention certain incidents that occurred during his night patrol. That morning Luang Pu said to the group, “You know, monks nowadays really have the ability to dedicate merit. They can dedicate merit even to their Preceptor who is still living in the flesh.” Only when someone committed a major offence would Luang Pu summon the individual to him. The individual would then be told in

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<sup>30</sup> This monk mistook the knock to be coming from a ghost as a sign of begging for merit.



private to leave the temple. Therefore, it was widely known that whoever disappeared quietly from the temple had to have made an irredeemable mistake.

Luang Pu always changed his patrol routine so that no one could anticipate his whereabouts. Some nights Luang Pu would stand in the shadow up in the Tripitaka Tower and look all around the temple grounds. Some nights Luang Pu would wear only his sleeveless one-shouldered singlet and go to stand in a dark corner carrying a lit cigarette in his hand so that any monk trying to leave the temple at night would not suspect that it was him standing there. For example, at one point there was a group of novice monks that regularly left the temple at night to go watch a movie. They had no idea that Luang Pu knew about their nocturnal activity. The leader of this group of novice monks was called Somjit Chamrasami. He smoked cigarettes as well. One night Somjit and his gang were leaving the temple as usual, but that night he did not have his lighter with him. When he looked toward the Upasatha Hall, he saw a glowing light and thought a monk was there to sneak a cigarette. He went directly toward the glow so that he could light his cigarette.

Needless to say, Somjit came face to face with Luang Pu who was carrying a switch in one hand. Luang Pu told the novice monk that he had known about the gang's nocturnal activity and the fact that they had not been paying attention to their study. Luang Pu told Somjit to fetch his friends. Any novice monk that confessed his transgression would be spared the switch, but any novice monk that refused to confess would get the switch. Luang Pu, then, pointed at Somjit and said to him that he was leading his friends down the path of wrongfulness. Somjit was afraid that Luang Pu would use the switch on him and he entreated Luang Pu, "Please, Luang Por<sup>31</sup>, please don't hit me." Luang Pu had no intention of using the switch. He was holding the switch just to intimidate the wayward novice monks. Luang Pu told Somjit that he would not use the switch on anyone if they would behave themselves and study hard. From then on, the novice monk Somjit was a transformed youth. He had practiced meditation until he attained Phra Dhammakaya and went on to study Vijja Dhammakaya.

One night, Luang Pu saw a novice monk whose face was covered with a white powder. Luang Pu did not deem it suitable for a novice monk to do that. Luang Pu summoned the novice monk and asked why he applied white powder on his face. The novice monk answered that he applied the powder in order to treat his acne. Luang Pu told him not to do it again.

On another night, Luang Pu was walking past the nun's dormitory. There was a nun there that had a friend staying over in order to observe the Eight Precepts. That night, it was very late, but the light in the room was still on. Luang Pu looked inside the room and saw that the nun was trying on her friend's blouse and she and her friend were looking into the mirror and having a good laugh. Luang Pu picked up a small piece of brick and threw it into the room. He did it three times in a row. The nun went outside, but did not see anyone so she said, "Who threw the

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<sup>31</sup> The term Luang Por means Venerable Father whereas the term Luang Pu means Venerable Grandfather. In Luang Pu's time, his followers called him Luang Por.

brick in here? I didn't do anything to you. Why did you throw the brick into my room? I'm going to tell Luang Por about this tomorrow." In the morning, the nun did tell Luang Pu about the incident in the hope that Luang Pu would find the culprit and have him punished.

Luang Pu asked the nun, "What were you doing at the time? Why didn't you turn off the light and go to sleep when it was so late already?" The nun did not dare tell Luang Pu about what she had been doing for fear of being scolded so she tried to find an indirect way of answering Luang Pu. Luang Pu told her that he was the one that threw the pieces of brick into her room. The nun was summarily admonished.

It is amazing how Luang Pu knew about everyone's conduct. Luang Pu could also tell if someone was lying. However, Luang Pu encouraged everyone to have the courage to always speak the truth. If people told Luang Pu the truth, he would help them solve whatever problem they might be having. Luang Pu said, "Tell me what's on your mind. Don't hide anything from me. I know everything because I already have your report card." As a result, no one dared lie to Luang Pu.

### **Giving Dhamma Lectures**

As a monk, Luang Pu had always made it a point to do things to benefit both himself and others. In benefiting himself, Luang Pu had practiced meditation until he could attain Phra Dhammakaya. In benefiting others, Luang Pu had taught other people so that they too could attain Phra Dhammakaya and bear witness to the Lord Buddha's Teachings and Luang Pu's achievement of elevated meditative attainments. Luang Pu was very serious about teaching Vijja Dhammakaya and wanted everyone that took the time and effort to practice meditation to receive the lasting benefits of Vijja Dhammakaya. Luang Pu taught meditation practice to the monks and novice monks after the evening chanting and a brief exhortation. The nuns would also practice meditation at the same time, but in a different venue, such as, in the study hall.

On Thursdays at 2 p.m., Luang Pu would teach meditation practice at the study hall to a large number of the Buddhist Communities, which included monks from the United States, the U.K., Laos, Cambodia, etc. The Venerable Phratipparinya wrote in B.E. 2489, "Many people came to learn meditation practice. There have been altogether more than 40,000 people over the past 15 years."

Luang Pu's Dhamma lectures were taken from the Tripitaka. Luang Pu would begin the lecture by citing the Pali verse and follow with the Thai translation and elaboration in order to promote a deeper understanding of the Scriptures on the listeners' part. The Most Venerable Phradhamtasatarn, the former Abbot of Wat Chanasongkram had this to say about Luang Pu's scriptural knowledge:

“Luang Pu was quite an expert in Scriptures study. If he were to translate Pali in those days, he would have earned the scholastic title of ‘Phramaha’. But, Luang Pu did not translate any Pali text because he was intent on the kind of Scriptures study that led to emancipation. In other words, he studied the Scriptures in order to teach it to the laity and encourage right practice. Luang Pu was not interested in Scriptures study for the sake of a certificate or other recognition. Luang Pu can be said to have completed the third, fourth, and fifth grades of Pali studies. Having accumulated enough scriptural knowledge, Luang Pu went on to accumulate Vipassana knowledge.”<sup>32</sup>

On another occasion, the Venerable Phra Pimondham (Choi Thanadatto) requested Luang Pu to give a Dhamma lecture on ‘Meditation Practice’ at the Upasatha Hall of Wat Mahadhatu on October 7, B.E. 2490.<sup>33</sup> So many monks and novice monks attended the lecture that many had to sit on the floor of the Upasatha Hall. There were also a large number of male and female lay devotees there. After the lecture, the Venerable Phra Pimondham praised Luang Pu for his excellent lecture. He had invited Luang Pu to teach meditation practice at Wat Mahadhatu several times afterward.

### **Helping with Human Suffering**

Since Luang Pu spent most of his time practicing meditation, he received visitors once during lunch, and again at 5 p.m. Luang Pu was loving and kind to everyone that came to him for help. He welcomed everyone in the same manner regardless of their position or the lack thereof.

Generally, Luang Pu would receive visitors sitting on his chair while every visitor sat on the floor. Luang Pu did not care if the visitor made an offering of requisites or not. He taught every pupil who had attained Phra Dhammakaya to help people without expecting gain and recognition and to be content with just enough food to nourish the body so that it could be used for meditation practice. It was Luang Pu’s opinion that it was the duty of all of his Vija Dhammakaya pupils to help with human suffering. They were to welcome everyone cheerfully. They were not allowed to show that they had had enough or that they minded the work. They were to perform their duty with fortitude and patience. Some visitors might talk nonsense. Others might have only selfish gain in mind. Yet, Luang Pu listened to everyone in a cheerful manner. Whoever came to Luang Pu for help, he would have the person practice meditation first. In the meantime, Luang Pu or another Vija Dhammakaya practitioner would go to solve the problem at the root cause. Luang Pu would then advise the person to do certain things in order to resolve his problem.

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<sup>32</sup> Taken from the Dhamma lecture given by the Venerable Phradhamtasanatorn of Wat Chanasongkram on Wednesday, March 25, B.E. 2502 at Wat Paknam.

<sup>33</sup> This Dhamma lecture was recorded by the Venerable Phratipparinya (Toop Kalambasuta) and formed part of the book ‘Duang Sila’ which was printed the first time in B.E. 2490 by Mr. Savad Osatanukroh, the owner of the drug company Osothsapa (Tekhengyu) on the occasion of Luang Pu’s 64<sup>th</sup> Birthday Anniversary.

## Practicing Vijja Dhammakaya

Luang Pu practiced meditation in earnest and meditation practice took up most of his time. Luang Pu did not like going away from the temple for fear of wasting precious time which could be spent practicing meditation. If it was absolutely necessary to leave the temple, Luang Pu would make the trip in as short a time as possible. Luang Pu refused to stay overnight away from the temple ever since he became the Abbot of Wat Paknam.

Nowadays, it is very difficult to explain exactly what it means to practice Vijja Dhammakaya and it is equally difficult to understand it. The reason is that Vijja Dhammakaya is so profound and refined that to understand it the person must already have attained Phra Dhammakaya and had experience in practicing Vijja Dhammakaya. But, in those days, a large number of people knew how to practice Vijja Dhammakaya.

It can be said; however, that *practicing Vijja Dhammakaya means the kind of work that is done by the mind of someone who has already attained Phra Dhammakaya*. When a person practices Vijja Dhammakaya, he is using his mind to simultaneously study and research Vijja Dhammakaya; hence, the work requires the close supervision of an expert teacher like Luang Pu. Roughly speaking, the work can be compared to a professor learnt in a particular field guiding his team to carry out research in that field.

The place where Vijja Dhammakaya was practiced was called “Vijja Dhammakaya Workshop”. In those days, it was a large kuti made of wood with zinc fencing. Additions were made on both sides of the kuti in order to enlarge it. There was a partition in the middle to separate the room into two parts. The monks and Luang Pu occupied one part of the kuti. A curtain was hung to separate Luang Pu’s space from the monks’. On the other side of the partition was the nuns’ room. The monks and nuns could not see each other and did not know each other. Both the monks and nuns would hear only Luang Pu’s voice. In entering the workshop, the monks would enter from the Tripitaka Tower whereas the nuns would enter from the Vihara. Luang Pu made sure that the monks and nuns did not meet.

The work in the workshop for both the monks and the nuns was divided into shifts. The first group practiced Vijja Dhammakaya from 6 p.m. to midnight. The second group began at midnight and ended at 6 a.m. the next morning. During the day, the first group worked the first half of the day and the second group the latter half. In other words, the work was carried out 24 hours a day.

In the workshop, there was a rectangular bench which was separate from other seats. It was called ‘the absence of sense perception bench’. The term *“The absence of sense perception” means that the mind is removed from any sense perception by the body as it merges as one with Phra Dhammakaya and penetrates deeper and deeper into limitless Supramundane Knowledge*. The person sitting on ‘the absence of sense perception bench’ had to be able to maintain a deep meditative state for many hours at a time. A small mosquito net was

hung over the bench. The rest of the group sat together inside a large mosquito net. There were altogether about 30 monks on one side of the workshop and 30 nuns on the other side. People who had not attained Phra Dhammakaya were not allowed inside the workshop for fear that they might disrupt the meditation work or have questions about things that they could not understand.

The day that Luang Pu began assembling the team to practice Vijja Dhammakaya was the Rains-Entry Day in B.E. 2474. Ever since then the work had continued for a total of 28 years up until Luang Pu's passing.

## **Luang Pu's Meditation Practice**

### **Being Resolute**

One characteristic which Luang Pu possessed since he was little was his resolute nature. It was Luang Pu's resolute nature that had made it possible for him to practice meditation until he attained Phra Dhammakaya.

Luang Pu's person was the very representation of grace and dignity. The minute one saw Luang Pu, one could not help but feel love and respect for him and want to stay close to him. In Luang Pu's presence, people would automatically behave themselves because Luang Pu inspired awe, love, and respect in everyone who saw him. Luang Pu was like a Field Marshal commanding an entire army. He was outstanding, graceful, and dignified. Whenever Luang Pu watched a person's face steadily and the person looked into his eyes, he would feel as though the light from Luang Pu's eyes had penetrated his mind to make him feel confident, safe, and warm.

Luang Pu's words were always truthful and came straight from his heart. If it was the truth, Luang Pu was always willing to speak it. He was not perturbed by any criticism which might come his way. The Most Venerable Somdej Pa wrote in his book about Luang Pu:

“One day a wealthy merchant from Sampeng Market asked Luang Pu while he was having lunch if anyone would come that day to donate money for the construction of new kutis. There were no fewer than 20 people sitting there near Luang Pu and they pricked up their ears to listen carefully to what answer Luang Pu would give to the merchant. Luang Pu sat still for about five minutes and said that there would be people coming to donate money for the construction of two or three new kutis on that day.

After Luang Pu was finished with his meal, a group of male and female devotees approached Luang Pu, paid him homage, and said that they wished to donate money for the construction of two or three kutis. Miraculously, things happened just as Luang Pu had foretold. Someone made a comment that Luang Pu's forecast was amazingly accurate, but perhaps he should only foretell things in front of one or two people so that he would not risk embarrassing himself should his forecast turn out to be wrong. Luang Pu said, *“How can Buddhism be*

*wrong? The Lord Buddha's Dhamma is authentic and true. Phra Dhammakaya never deceives anyone."* At Luang Pu's comment, the person had nothing else to say. I wrote about this incident in this book to give the reader an idea of how exact Luang Pu's insight was. Luang Pu would only report the things that he saw with his insight."

Luang Pu had this to say about meditation practice.

*"Cessation is the key to success. You need first to achieve cessation. There is no need to talk about anything elaborate, but let's agree first on the concept of cessation. If cessation is not achieved, Dhammakaya cannot be attained. You're also a human being, why can't you achieve cessation if you really put your mind to it? You can't achieve cessation because you are not resolute. If you are resolute, then you can achieve it. How resolute must you be? How about as resolute as putting your life on the line? Let your blood and flesh dry up, leaving only bones and skin, if you can't attain Dhammakaya, you will not rise from your seat. If everyone is this resolute, then everyone can attain Dhammakaya. I did it twice myself. I put my life on the line the first time. When the time came, I could achieve cessation and I didn't die. The second time, I did the same thing and again I didn't die.*

*Our Lord Buddha was resolute in his meditation practice. He had vowed that he would practice meditation until His flesh, blood, bones, and skin dried up. It was with such resoluteness that our Lord Buddha achieved cessation and attained Pubbenivasanusatinana in the evening; Cutupapatanana during the second watch, and Asavakkhayanana during the third watch. When our Master was this resolute, we as His disciples must be just as resolute. We must be willing to die if we can't achieve cessation."*

### **Being Persistent**

Luang Pu was persistent in his meditation practice and never missed a day of it. Luang Pu said that he had never stopped practicing meditation even for just one day since the day he entered the monkhood. Luang Pu had this to say about meditation practice, *"Perform the act, and notice its fruit. Endeavor to do it because it is sublime."*

Luang Pu said that when we practice meditation we must do it all the way. It means that whether or not we have any inner experience we must continue to practice it. We must never allow the time to pass idly by. Persistence has its maximum point. Patience has its maximum point. If we have not reached the maximum point in persistence, we cannot say that we have already persisted. If we have not reached the maximum point in patience, we cannot say that we have already been patient.

## **Practicing According to the Path of Nibbana**

It can be said that Luang Pu had practiced according to the Path of Nibbana. The Lord Buddha said, “Buddhist monks that have studied the Dhamma and persisted in meditation practice is said to be heedful; hence, close to Nibbana.”<sup>34</sup>

Luang Pu said, *“Practice meditation in order to achieve cessation of your mind. If cessation can be achieved even just for the blink of an eye, the merit earned far outweighs that earned from donating money to have an Upasatha Hall, a shrine hall, or a study hall built. We must be determined to seek the merit field inherent in Buddhism by bringing our mind to a complete standstill, for it is through the cessation of our mind that the Path of Nibbana can be found. Alms-giving and keeping the Precepts cannot be compared to the cessation of our mind.”*

## **Higher Morality (Adhisila)**

Luang Pu observed the monks’ Precepts immaculately and practiced according to the Dhamma-Discipline. He had nothing but good wishes for the monks, novice monks, and nuns. He wanted every monk and novice monk to be immaculate when it came to their Precepts. Luang Pu never touched money and assigned a lay purser to handle the finances of the temple. One such lay purser was Mr. Prayoon Suntara. He took care of all the finances of the temple and kept a careful record of all the incomes and expenses. He also looked after all the things that people gave to Luang Pu and the temple. Mr. Prayoon did this work until he was very old.

Luang Pu always ate his meals with calm composure in accordance with the Sekhiyavatta. Luang Pu never spilled a drop of broth and always pushed the rice on his plate toward the middle of the plate to form a neat pile.

Any fruit juice that Luang Pu drank after the last meal at 11 a.m. had to come from fruits, which were no bigger than a fist. Luang Pu especially enjoyed cane juice. One day the cook served Luang Pu some juice, but when he found out that it was the juice of a pomelo, he told the cook to take it back to the kitchen. He told her if it was the juice of a tangerine or a bel fruit, it would be alright. Someone once gave Luang Pu some fresh milk in the evening, but he refused to drink it. In those days, Luang Pu forbade the consumption of milk and butter after the last meal at 11 a.m.

There was another incident that showed how immaculately Luang Pu observed the monks’ Precepts. At the time when Luang Pu fell gravely ill and could consume very little food, the Most Venerable Phrarajmolee was concerned for Luang Pu’s health and asked the nun Tanyanee Soodgate who was in charge of preparing special food for Luang Pu to cook some

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<sup>34</sup> *Aparihā Sutta. Anguttaranikāya. Catukanipāta.* Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, vol. 35, p. 143-144

soft-boiled rice and mash it before filtering the mixture through a white gauze-like cloth. She was to pour the liquid into a thermos so that Luang Pu would think it was just hot water. But, when the liquid was served to Luang Pu, he refused to drink it.

Luang Pu was a highly disciplined monk. Even when he was very ill, he refused to have anyone help him with his food. On days that someone tried to feed him rice water after the noon hour, Luang Pu refused to take any.

## **Gratitude**

When the Most Venerable Somdej Phravanarut (Tissadattathera)<sup>35</sup> was taken ill, Luang Pu showed his gratitude to the Most Venerable Somdej by having meals and bird's nest soup prepared and taken to him from Wat Paknam every day. Luang Pu had 40 bahts put aside daily for the purpose and at 4 a.m. every morning, Luang Pu had someone take the food by boat from Pakklong Market to Wat Phra Chetuphon. The food would arrive just in time for breakfast. The person in charge had to return and made his report to Luang Pu after the food had been delivered.

The food had to be taken by boat because it was wartime and the Phra Phuttha Yodfa Bridge had been damaged. There were no roads from Wat Paknam to Wat Phra Chetuphon and there was no available public transportation. Luang Pu did this for several months until the Most Venerable Somdej passed away.

Luang Pu's display of gratitude made the Most Venerable Somdej aware of Luang Pu's extraordinary virtue. One day the Venerable Phrapimotum (Thanadattathera) came to visit the Most Venerable Somdej one evening and he asked the venerable monk to endow upon Luang Pu the title of Preceptor which the venerable monk gladly did soon afterward.

Another example of Luang Pu's display of gratitude had to do with a lay woman called Ms. Nuam. At the time, when Luang Pu was still studying the Scriptures at Wat Phra Chetuphon, he had a very difficult time securing food. There were days when he did not have enough to eat. And there were other days when he did not have anything to eat at all. In those days, there was a woman that sold rice and curry for a living. She believed in Luang Pu's virtue and pledged to offer him lunch every day. Her name was Ms. Nuam. Years later after Luang Pu had been the Abbot of Wat Paknam for many years; Ms. Nuam became old and decrepit with no one to look after her in her old age. Luang Pu had her fetched to Wat Paknam and provided for her until she passed away. Luang Pu also made arrangements for her funeral and cremation.

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<sup>35</sup> He used to assume the position of Ecclesiastical District Officer of Amphoe Bhasicharoen and Wat Paknam was one of the temples under his jurisdiction.



### **Seeing Value in the Smallest Things**

Luang Pu valued everything given to him by the lay devotees. On the way to the refectory, if Luang Pu saw any rice grains on the ground, he would tell a youngster to pick them up. Luang Pu did not overlook even a few rice grains. He was of the opinion that if such a small amount of rice was picked up every time it was dropped to the ground during transportation; soon enough there would be enough to feed someone. Lay devotees were especially moved to witness this particular virtue of Luang Pu. It is not surprising, therefore, how boatloads of rice had continuously found their ways to Wat Paknam.

Luang Pu was frugal and paid attention to details. If he saw pieces of wood during his walk, he would pick them up and used them for firewood. Torn dishcloth was not discarded because it could be used to plug something that sprang a leak. Leftovers on the plates were not discarded, but added together to feed the animals. Luang Pu took the time to teach people these things.

### **Frugality**

Over the years, lay devotees have offered Luang Pu many triple robe sets, but Luang Pu did not keep them for his own use. He used only what was necessary and gave the rest away to the monks and novice monks. Luang Pu chose to have his old robe repaired before he would change into a new one. During WWII, scarcity prevailed and Luang Pu was especially frugal. He would have several one-shouldered singlets sown together to make a robe. Since the different singlets were of varying shades of yellow, no monk or novice monk would take the robe from Luang Pu so Luang Pu wore it himself. Later, one of Luang Pu's followers asked Luang Pu for the robe so that he could put it in his altar room at home and Luang Pu gave the robe to him.

Lay devotees knew how careful Luang Pu was with their donated money and they felt pleased to continue making donations to Luang Pu to help support the temple and the Buddhist Cause.

### **Contentment**

Luang Pu lived very simply in an old wooden kuti with an old zinc roof. Inside the kuti, there was an old bed, but there was no refrigerator or other modern conveniences. Luang Pu had given away everything and had spent what he had to the care of Buddhism.

## **Cultured Speech**

Some people were under the impression that Luang Pu was a strict disciplinarian when in fact Luang Pu knew to choose his words carefully in that Luang Pu's words were always loving and kind. And he would never say anything to make someone lose heart. For example, on one occasion, the temple cook made a mistake and did not make sure that the rice was fully cooked before preparing a tray for Luang Pu. All Luang Pu said to her was, "Cook, please bring me another dish of rice, this rice is hard." When the cook took a good look at the rice, she did find that indeed the rice was far from being cooked.

## **High Level of Love and Kindness**

Luang Pu was loving and kind to everyone. He shared what he had with everyone. The number of mangos that a lay devotee offered to Luang Pu at any one time was never enough to go around, so Luang Pu resorted to putting them in a basket and at times let the nuns draw lots to see who would get them. During one cold season, a boy came to stand in front of the Vija Dhammakaya Workshop. He looked cold and Ms. Jintana Osot (who was a nun at the time) felt so sorry for the boy that she took off the only shawl she had and gave it to the boy to keep him warm. That evening in the workshop, Luang Pu asked, "Who doesn't have a shawl?" and he passed a shawl to Ms. Jintana through the small opening in the partition.

On another occasion, the novice monk Tuanchai had been wearing the same robe for seven or eight years until it became much worn. He decided to go and ask Luang Pu for a new robe. As soon as he went to pay homage to Luang Pu, Luang Pu asked, "What is it, son?" "My only robe is much worn, venerable sir." Luang Pu immediately asked Mr. Prayoon to bring the novice monk a new robe.

## **Humility**

The Venerable Phramahachodok was a senior monk who had jurisdiction over Wat Paknam. His understanding of meditation practice was different from that of Luang Pu. He was of the understanding that Vija Dhammakaya was not taught in Buddhism; hence, it was not Vipassana and could not lead to emancipation. He did not believe Vija Dhammakaya to be the correct practice. When he came to check things out at Wat Paknam, Luang Pu treated him with due respect. The two monks conversed about the Dhamma in the Upasatha Hall for several days. Before Phramahachodok left, Luang Pu presented a photograph to him with an inscription, "This photograph is a souvenir presented to venerable sir on the occasion that he has kindly come to teach me about meditation practice which is correct in every way." Being a junior monk, Luang Pu had conducted himself in a most humble manner.

As a result of this incident, some people thought that Luang Pu had abandoned Vijja Dhammakaya and took up instead the meditation practice subscribed by Phramahachodok. But, the fact was that Luang Pu had merely treated Phramahachodok who was a senior monk with due respect. Besides, there has not been a single piece of evidence to show that Luang Pu had abandoned Vijja Dhammakaya.

## **Exemplary Conduct**

### **Propagating Vijja Dhammakaya Worldwide**

Luang Pu had taught Vijja Dhammakaya to the laity with the result that a large number of people were able to attain Phra Dhammakaya. Luang Pu also sent monks and nuns who had attained Phra Dhammakaya to go out and propagate Vijja Dhammakaya all over the country as well as abroad. Luang Pu wished to make Vijja Dhammakaya available to everyone in the world so that they could learn to practice Vijja Dhammakaya and gain true inner peace. When enough people in the world can attain inner peace, then world peace is sure to follow.

The propagation of Vijja Dhammakaya began when Luang Pu sent the Venerable Thitavedo Bhikku to teach Vijja Dhammakaya in the U.K. As a result, many British had become believers and one of these was the world-renowned philosopher named Professor William Purfurst of London University. In B.E. 2497, the professor followed the Venerable Thitavedo to Wat Paknam. He requested Luang Pu to ordain him and teach him to attain Phra Dhammakaya. The professor was ordained on Visakha Puja Day in B.E. 2497 at Wat Paknam. He was given the Pali name 'Kapilavaddho Bhikkhu' and became the first non-Thai to be ordained as a monk in Thailand.

Venerable Kapilavaddho Bhikkhu endeavored to practice meditation until he eventually attained Phra Dhammakaya. Luang Pu told the venerable monk to employ Vijja Dhammakaya to fetch his late father to come and receive the merit earned from his ordination. However, the venerable monk could not find his father anywhere; not in the Celestial Realm or the Hell Realm. Finally, Luang Pu went with the venerable monk and together they checked every corner of the Celestial Realm and the Hell Realm and still could not find the venerable monk's late father. Finally, Luang Pu told the venerable monk to check the Human Realm. It turned out that the venerable monk's father had been reborn in the Human Realm as none other than his own daughter.<sup>36</sup> Venerable Kapilavaddho Bhikkhu was very grateful to Luang Pu for everything and for helping him employ Vijja Dhammakaya to successfully find his late father.

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<sup>36</sup> Chalam Usuparat, *A Pandit's Treasure*. Bangkok: Thaiprasarn Printing House, B.E. 2529, 169

Venerable Kapilavaddho Bhikkhu once gave a speech at one of the meetings at Wat Paknam. He said that he had been treated with love and kindness by Luang Pu. He said that he had come to Wat Paknam to learn the practice of Samatha and Vipassana meditation after having gained some theoretical knowledge about the subject. He said that he was determined to continue learning Vijja Dhammakaya until he could attain the Path and Fruit of Nibbana. He believed in Luang Pu and in Vijja Dhammakaya. He said that he planned to ordain for life and would try to build a Buddhist temple in the U.K.<sup>37</sup>

After Venerable Kapilavaddho Bhikkhu attained Phra Dhammakaya and could teach meditation practice, Luang Pu sent him back to propagate Buddhism in the U.K. on November 8, B.E. 2497. In those days, 23 people came to learn Samatha and Vipassana meditation with the venerable monk and four out of these 23 people achieved excellent meditative results. The venerable monk later asked Luang Pu for permission to bring these four people to Thailand to undertake ordination at Wat Paknam. Luang Pu happily gave his permission.

On December 15, B.E. 2498, the Venerable Kapilavaddho Bhikkhu returned to Wat Paknam once again together with three other men from the U.K. who had already ordained as novice monks.<sup>38</sup> They wanted Luang Pu to ordain them as monks because they wished to study Vijja Dhammakaya with Luang Pu. The three men were scheduled to be ordained on Magha Puja Day, January 27, B.E. 2499. The ordination ceremony was quite a fanfare because Luang Pu wanted Buddhists all over Thailand to rejoice in this ordination of non-Thai men.

The names of these three novice monks were as follows:

1. The novice monk Robert Alnison, a British aged 24: He had a B.A. in English Literature and used to work as a sales agent. His ordained name was Saddhavatto.
2. The novice monk George Plak, a Jamaican aged 33: He had an M.A. in Economics and used to work for the British government. His ordained name was Vijjavatto.
3. The novice monk Peter Morgan, a British aged 30: He used to work as an electrical engineer. His ordained name was Panthavatto.

These three monks were well educated and formerly subscribed to a different religion. However, they had all converted to Buddhism and decided to spend the rest of their lives in the monkhood. They were instrumental in helping to propagate the Lord Buddha's Teachings in their homelands. Naturally, the Thai people were thrilled to witness the ordination of these three non-Thai monks.

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<sup>37</sup> Luang Pu wished to build a Buddhist temple in the U.K. in order to establish Buddhism there and had consulted with Prime Minister P. Piboonsongkram about it. Unfortunately, Luang Pu became gravely ill in the meantime and the project went nowhere. However, the Venerable Kapilavatto was successful in establishing a meditation center in the U.K. It was called, "The Buddha Hall of Hamstead."

<sup>38</sup> The fourth person did not come to Thailand because his parents passed away.

In addition, there were three British women that had studied meditation with Venerable Kapilavaddho Bhikkhu. They became believers of Vijja Dhammakaya. They asked Luang Pu for permission to become Buddhist nuns. Luang Pu allowed them to practice meditation and live as nuns at Wat Paknam.

Some Japanese also showed interest in Luang Pu's teachings. On June 10, B.E. 2497, an envoy of Japanese monks under the leadership of His Holiness the Supreme Patriarch Tacachina came to Wat Paknam to learn about the different bases of the mind. His Holiness had the opportunity to learn about stilling the mind at the seventh base or the center of the body. His Holiness was so impressed with what he had learnt that he volunteered to spread the teaching in Japan. One of the Japanese monks, Venerable Kachiyuisai achieved such a joyful inner experience that he said in tears, "I've never experienced such happiness in all of my life."

In B.E. 2500, there was a Japanese man called Mr. Tako Chimaruji who ordained as a monk in the Nichiren Sect.<sup>39</sup> He was interested in practicing meditation and wanted to ordain as a Buddhist monk living at Wat Paknam. At the time, Luang Pu fell gravely ill and the Most Venerable Somdej Pa who at the time had the title of Phradhamvarodom ordained Mr. Chimaruji in Luang Pu's place. Mr. Chimaruji received the ordained name of 'Dhammachando'. He stayed at Wat Paknam for six months. After he could attain Phra Dhammakaya, he returned to teach Vijja Dhammakaya in Japan.

### **Attaining the Uttermost of Dhamma**

During the course of Perfections pursuit, every great Bodhisatta has to encounter countless obstacles. In Buddhism, such obstacles are called 'Mara' or 'Phya Mara'. Every great Bodhisatta has to pursue Perfections to the fullest extent before he can eventually free himself from Mara's dominion and attain Nibbana. Every human being is under Mara's dominion, but so very few of us are aware of this fact.

*Luang Pu said, "Phya Mara is forcing humankind to be at their beck and call and their slaves. They can use people to do anything. They can tell one person to verbally abuse, beat, punch or kill another person. Mara can force human beings to do anything, to be their slaves, to be deprived and bad, to be poor and destitute, to meet with all kinds of obstacles, to experience lacks and scarcity. And the list goes on."*

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<sup>39</sup> This sect was founded by Nichiren (B.E. 1765 – 1825). Followers of this sect subscribe to the Punadarika Sutta alone and practice by chanting 'Nammyoho-rence-kyo'.

*“Who are the entities that cause rebirth, aging and death? Where are they? In the entire country, in the entire world, in the trillions of galaxies, in the infinite number of galaxies, in the Three Spheres of Existence, in the Hell Realm of Loganta, and in Nibbana, no one knows who and what cause such things, but here at Wat Paknam, some people know why things are the way they are.*

*Who are responsible for the aging process? Here at Wat Paknam, we not only know who they are but we also know where they are. We know that they are Phya Mara. They cause all of us to age, get sick, and die. They cause us to be reborn so that we have to age, get sick and die over and over again. The round of rebirth is fraught with calamities. Birth is fraught with calamities. Sometimes, the mother dies. Sometimes, the infant dies. Sometimes, both mother and child die; and the father decides to commit suicide by jumping into deep water. All of these are Phya Mara’s handiworks. They use these calamities to inflict pain and suffering on all the beings that belong to ‘Phra’.<sup>40</sup>*

*Any person that is working for ‘Phra’ is being constantly persecuted by Mara. On the whole, they will use whatever means they can to wreak havoc in people’s lives. They force people to kill each other. They force people to commit suicide by swallowing poison, jumping into deep water or hanging themselves. All of these are Phya Mara’s handiworks, no one else’s.*

*No one knows about this truth. No one in the trillions of galaxies, in the infinite number of galaxies, and in the current Nibbana,<sup>41</sup> absolutely no one in these places knows that Phya Mara are the forces behind our rebirth, aging, sickness, and death. They use their superior supernatural might and higher knowledge to drive us and keep us under their dominion.*

Luang Pu’s goal is not merely to escape from Phya Mara’s dominion by extinguishing all of his defilements and attain Nibbana. But Luang Pu’s ultimate goal is to attain the Uttermost of Dhamma. This is the point and time where all the five hordes of Mara can be completely destroyed such that they will no longer be able to dominate and harm any living beings again. Luang Pu said,

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<sup>40</sup> The word ‘Phra’ means sublime and in this context it is the short form of Phra Samma Sambuddhajao or the Lord Buddha.

<sup>41</sup> Luang Pu teaches that there are two main types of Buddhas and two main types of Nibbana: 1) the original Nibbana is where the Lord Buddhas entered Nibbana with their physical body and 2) the current Nibbana where the Lord Buddhas entered Nibbana without their physical body but with their Dhammakaya.

*“The Sotapanna Dhammakaya, the Sakadakami Dhammakaya, the Anagami Dhammakaya, and the Arahat Dhammakaya can be attained, but they cannot be retained. Only the Gotrabhu Dhammakaya can be retained. Why can’t the other Dhammakayas be retained? This is because Phya Mara have laid down roots in the realm of the refined to prevent them from being retained. However, the situation is currently being investigated and corrected. This speaker is doing it, along with the team. When we can successfully undo the roots laid down in the refined realm, then we will be able to both attain and retain the Sotapanna Dhammakaya, the Sakadakami Dhammakaya, the Anagami Dhammakaya, and the Arahat Dhammakaya. Then, we will be able to fly ....”*

Although Luang Pu knew that aging, sickness, and death were still with us, he had the courage to want to boldly work toward the point where he could eventually overthrow Mara and gain true independence so that he and every living being would no longer have to suffer rebirth, aging, sickness, and death. Such was Luang Pu’s peerless aspiration.

## **The Heir of Vijja Dhammakaya**

Before Luang Pu passed away, he told his top pupils to continue propagating Vijja Dhammakaya for the rest of their lives. They were not to go anywhere, but to remain at Wat Paknam to wait for the rightful heir of Vijja Dhammakaya. As a result, after Luang Pu passed away several of his trusted pupils continued to do as Luang Pu commanded. Two of these top pupils included Master Nun Chandra Khonnokyoong and Master Nun Tongsuk Samdangpun.

Both these nuns continued to teach Vijja Dhammakaya at Wat Paknam. After Master Nun Tongsuk Samdangpun passed away, Master Nun Chandra Khonnokyoong or more commonly referred to as ‘Khun Yai’ carried on with the teaching and propagating of Vijja Dhammakaya. Khun Yai was determined to train her pupils well and she did it with love and kindness.

After some number of pupils, who shared the same ideal as Khun Yai, had gathered around her, she led them to build a sacred place in order to accommodate an increasing number of people who would be coming to join the group in the future in order to fulfill Luang Pu’s command. This sacred place is now called Wat Phra Dhammakaya. It is located in what used to be the rice paddies of Rangsit in the province of Pathum Thani. The group or the Dhammakaya Community has now grown to include hundreds of thousands of people and a certain number of whom have come together to practice meditation regularly. Buddhism and Vijja Dhammakaya have now been propagated worldwide under the leadership of the Most Venerable Phrarajbhavanavisudh (Luang Por Dhammajayo), the heir of Vijja Dhammakaya.

## The Dhamma Power

### Right Practice of Vija Dhammakaya

#### Right Concentration

Meditation practice is not confined to Buddhism alone because it is also practiced in other religions. However, only Buddhism teaches about right concentration. Right concentration requires the practitioner to bring his mind back inside his body. The Lord Buddha had this to say about right concentration:

“Great king, Buddhist monks train themselves to be mindful of their every step, every glance, every posture, in the way they put on their robe, hold their alms-bowl, in the way they eat, drink, eliminate body waste. They are mindful when they walk, stand, sit, sleep, wake up, speak or keep quiet. Great king, Buddhist monks maintain their mindfulness and self-possession in such manners.”<sup>42</sup>

Once Luang Pu practiced meditation until he could attain Phra Dhammakaya, he said clearly that in right concentration the practitioner must place his mind at the seventh base of his body. The seventh base is two fingers’ breadth above the navel. The seventh base is the center of the body. It is also the entrance to Nibbana. When we place our mind at the center of our body, we are essentially placing it in the Middle Way or Majjhimapatipada by which The Noble Eightfold Path, which is the path that leads to the removal of all defilements and the attainment of Nibbana, can be penetrated. The Lord Buddha said,

*“In whatsoever doctrine and discipline, Subhadda, the Noble Eightfold Path is not found, neither in it is there found a man of true saintliness of the first, or of the second, or of the third, or of the fourth degree.”<sup>43</sup> And in whatsoever doctrine and discipline, Subhadda, the Noble Eightfold Path is found, in it is found the man of true saintliness of the first, and the second, and the third, and the fourth degree. Now in this doctrine and discipline, Subhadda, is found the Noble Eightfold Path, and in it too, are found, Subhadda, the men of true saintliness of all the four degrees. Void are the systems of other teachers – void of true saints. And in this one, Subhadda, may the brethren live the Life that’s Right, so that the world be not bereft of Arahants<sup>44</sup>.*

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<sup>42</sup> *Sumamgalavilāsini. Aṭṭhakathā Dīgha-nikāya. Sīlakhandhavagga.* Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, vol.11, p.320

<sup>43</sup> The first to fourth degrees are Sotapanna, Sakadakami, Anagami, and Arahant.

<sup>44</sup> *(Māhāparinibbāna Sutta) Dīgha-nikāya. Mahāvagga.* Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, vol.13, p.318



Vijja Dhammakaya belongs to the Lord Buddha. It is the meditation practice, which arises from right view and right concentration and its main goal is to extinguish all defilements so that the Path of Nibbana can be penetrated. The Lord Buddha attained Self-Enlightenment through Vijja Dhammakaya. And the Ariya individuals attained the different levels of Enlightenment through Vijja Dhammakaya.

### **Samma Araham**

“*Samma araham*” is the mantra that Luang Pu employed during meditation. When we practice meditation according to Luang Pu’s teaching, it means that we recite this mantra to help us keep our mind still at the seventh base of our body. Once the mind can be stilled at just the right way, Phra Dhammakaya will be attained.

The word ‘*samma*’ means ‘right’ or ‘correct’. It is usually used together with the word ‘sambuddho’ as in ‘sammasambuddho’ which means right Self-Enlightenment. It is also used in the Noble Eightfold Path, for example, in sammaditthi, in sammasankappa. The word ‘*araham*’ means ‘**the Lord Buddha is an Arahant**’.

Therefore, ‘*samma araham*’ means the Lord Buddha is the rightful Arahant; hence, the term reminds us of the Lord Buddha’s virtue.

The teaching monks of old said that the mantra ‘samma araham’ is a form of Buddhanussati<sup>45</sup> and very helpful in meditation practice. Every time Luang Pu guided group meditation, he would remind the students of meditation to contemplate the Lord Buddha’s virtue because in so doing the mind becomes awake, bright, strong and conducive to meditation practice. Normally, our mind tends to wander haphazardly and incessantly if there is nothing to anchor it. By having the Lord Buddha’s virtue to hold on to, our mind will be kept in a safe place whether it is awake or asleep. The Buddha-Power protects the person that exercises right mindfulness by contemplating the Buddha-Virtue.

*“Suppabuddhan pabujjhanti                      sada gotamasavaka*  
*Yesan diva ca ratto ca                              niccan buddhagata sati*  
  
*When a disciple of the Lord Gautama Buddha contemplates*  
*the Buddha-Virtue at all times, he is considered to be awake*  
  
*whether he is awake or asleep.*<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> It means contemplating the Lord Buddha’s virtue.

<sup>46</sup> *Dhammapadaṅṅ hagāthā. Aṅṅhakathā-Khuddaka-nikāya. Gāthā-Dhammapada.* Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, vol. 33, p. 332

From the book “Luang Por Sodh of Wat Paknam”, “Buddhanussati is the practice which brings about happiness for the meditator”. It is for this reason that Luang Pu was always reminding everyone not to allow their mind to be idle, but to contemplate the Lord Buddha’s virtue at all times. Such a practice may not yet lead us to attain the noble fruits, but it will certainly lead us to the Celestial Realm after we die.”

***“Yekeji Buddhan saranan gatase***

***Na te gamissanti apayabhumi***

***Pahaya manussan dehan***

***Devakayan paripuressanti***

***Whoever takes the Lord Buddha as his refuge***

***will not be destined for the state of loss and woe.***

***But, will be destined for the Celestial Realm after he dies.”<sup>47</sup>***

Buddhanussati is the practice that not only keeps the meditator safe but also prepares his mind for meditation. Whoever practices according to ‘samma araham’ is penetrating things that are both conditioned and unconditioned. He is removing all unwholesomeness. He is destroying rebirth and conceit. He is being equipped with due diligence. He is taking delight in the Dhamma. In other words, he is working toward Nibbana.

The word ‘**araham**’ has been used in the old days as well as now to remind people in their final moments to recall the Lord Buddha’s virtue. It is believed that whoever thinks of or chant the word ‘**araham**’ will have a good rebirth, that is, will be reborn in the States of Happiness.

In the first part of the book Visuddhimagga, which is an important Buddhist Scripture, there was given the definition of ‘araham’ as follows:

***“arakatta hattata ca kilesarina so muni***

***Hatasansarakkaro paccayadinamaraho***

***Na raho karoti papani Arahan tena vuccati***

***The Lord Buddha is an Arahant because he is distant from the enemy.***

***And have eradicated the enemy, which is defilements (1);***

***because he has destroyed the round of rebirth (1);***

***because he is worthy of homage, the four necessities, etc., (1)***

***because he does not commit unwholesome deeds in secret (1).”***

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<sup>47</sup> Manorothpurani. Aṭṭhakathā. Anguttaranikāya. Dukkanipāta. Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, vol. 33, p. 332

The mantra ‘samma araham’ refers directly to the Lord Buddha’s virtue. It is most fitting that Buddhist masters of old should teach their pupils to chant ‘samma araham’ when they practiced meditation. This way their minds could be kept elevated by focusing on the Lord Buddha’s virtue as they worked toward extinguishing all defilements, preparing to be the merit-field, and abstaining completely from committing unwholesome deeds in secret. Therefore, chanting the mantra ‘samma araham’ during meditation is considered to be right practice.

### **Cessation Is the Key to Success**

Luang Pu had taught monks, novice monks, and lay people to practice meditation so that they could attain Phra Dhammakaya. The technique involves keeping one’s mind still at the seventh base or the center of the body at all times. The strategy that Luang Pu used to help us keep our mind at the center of our body was to imagine a crystal Buddha Image or a crystal sphere there. Some people faulted Luang Pu for having taught people to become attached to an image. In response, Luang Pu had this to say,

“Practicing meditation is like walking up the stairs. If one does not take the first step in a sure-footed manner, how can one proceed up the next step? One can advance to the second step only after one has already taken the first step. In the same manner, one cannot advance to the third step unless one has already taken the second step. Moreover, as one proceeds up the stairs one has already left the first step behind.”

Luang Pu gave the definition of cessation as follows, ***“Cessation is Samatha and it is the key to success. This kind of success applies to both the secular world and the Dhamma world. It means that to obtain secular happiness, cessation of the mind must occur at the secular level; to obtain Dhamma happiness, cessation of the mind must occur at the Dhamma level. Cessation is the key to success. Cessation is the important key. Cessation of the mind is the only means to achieve Samatha from the very beginning all the way to Arahathship. Cessation of the mind is Buddhism itself and it is in full accordance with the Lord Buddha’s Teachings. If cessation is not achieved, even 40 or 50 years of Buddhist practice will prove to be fruitless because it is not in line with the Lord Buddha’s Teachings.”***

Luang Pu cited the example of Ongulimala whom our Lord Buddha helped to attain Arahathship just by using the word, “Cease”. Once the mind is still, one continues to experience stillness within stillness by moving deeper and deeper into the center of the body. Cessation of the mind must occur within the center of the body in this manner; otherwise, it is incorrect.

Once the mind is at a complete standstill at the 7<sup>th</sup> base or at the center of the body, it will see a bright crystal sphere the size of the moon or the sun. This phenomenon is called ***falling into the center*** and the mind comes to rest in the middle of this crystal sphere which is called ***“Dhammanupassanasatipathan” or “Pathamamagga” or “Ekayanamagga”***. This path is the main path or the one and only path. It is the path traveled by every Lord Buddha and every Arahath.

It is the only path that leads to Nibbana. The path leads only in one direction and does not split anywhere along the entire path. The speed with which one travels down the path depends on one's accumulated experience and merit.

## **The Supernatural Powers of Vijja Dhammakaya**

### **The Occurrence of Supernatural Events on Certain Buddhist Holy Days**

The supernatural powers of Vijja Dhammakaya are far too great to describe in toto because Vijja Dhammakaya belongs to the Lord Buddha whose supernatural powers are limitless. Vijja Dhammakaya was discovered by Luang Pu after it had disappeared for about 2,000 years. Here, a few examples of Vijja Dhammakaya's supernatural powers will be given in the hope that they will inspire the student to earnestly practice meditation until he/she can attain Phra Dhammakaya.

During Luang Pu's time, on certain Buddhist holy days, Luang Pu would request the Dhammakayas of the Lord Buddhas in Nibbana to appear in the sky to the lay people while they were circumambulating the Cetiya with lit candles in their hands. Therefore, on the day of the ceremony, a large number of people would show up in order to witness the supernatural powers of Vijja Dhammakaya. Before the circumambulation, Luang Pu would explain to everyone the meaning and importance of the ceremony. Luang Pu told them that during the circumambulation, they were to keep their minds still. There should not be any talking or any inappropriate conduct. Afterward, Luang Pu would lead everyone to chant.

By keeping the mind still, Luang Pu meant keeping it still at the seventh base of the body. If any person could 'see' the crystal sphere at the seventh base of his body, then he should keep his mind still in the middle of the crystal sphere. If any person could 'see' the refined human form or the astral body at the seventh base of his body, then he should keep his mind still at the center of the astral body. Whichever Inner Body a person could see with his mind's eye, he is to keep his mind still at the center of that particular Inner Body. The people were encouraged to keep their minds still as they chant 'samma araham' while circumambulating the Cetiya.

Sightings of the Lord Buddha had been reported. Not everyone saw the same Buddha Image. Some were clear, some were not. The Buddha Images seen by the different people also assumed different postures. Some were reclining. Some were sitting in the half-lotus position. Some were giving a blessing, etc. Some Buddha Images showed only the top half. Others saw the entire body. Some saw the physical body of the Lord Buddha. The Most Venerable Phradhammakittivong (Tongdee Suratejo, graduate of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade of Pali studies, Rajpandit), the Abbot of Wat Rajorasaram told us that when he was a novice monk at Wat Paknam, he saw with his own eyes the sky filled with Phra Dhammakayas on such occasions.

## The Supernatural Power of Luang Pu's Sacred Gifts

Luang Pu started to produce tiny sacred Buddha Images in an effort to raise funds for the construction of the Dhamma school called Phrapariyatidham School. Luang Pu had a rule whereby whoever donated 25 bahts or more toward the construction of the school would receive one sacred gift to remind the person of the Lord Buddha's virtue as well as the merit earned by his donation. The image was that of the Lord Buddha giving a blessing. It was engraved at the back the word, "***Dhammakhandha***".

Components of the sacred gift included talcum powder, dried fragrant flowers used in the daily worship of the Lord Buddha, and most importantly Luang Pu's shorn hair. The flowers were first dried and crushed before being mixed with the talcum powder and added to Luang Pu's hair. The mixture was then rolled into a lump and placed in a mold.

Luang Pu would give each donator only one sacred gift regardless of how large the donation might be. The sacred gift had to be received in person from Luang Pu's hand. If for some reasons, the sacred gift was lost, Luang Pu would not replace it. His Holiness Somdej Pa once asked Luang Pu, "***If someone donated 1,000 bahts, should he not receive five or ten sacred gifts?***" Luang Pu answered, "***My sacred gifts are priceless and one thousand or ten thousand bahts cannot do justice to even one sacred gift.***"

Even His Holiness Somdej Pa only received one sacred gift from Luang Pu. Later, His Holiness gave his sacred gift to a child that was brought by his parents to be named by him. Later on, His Holiness went to Luang Pu to ask for another sacred gift. Luang Pu told him once again that there was only one sacred gift for each donator. Later on still, His Holiness tried once again, but this time Luang Pu said nothing. His Holiness knew then that Luang Pu would never give him another sacred gift.

Luang Pu would only give out the sacred gifts at Wat Paknam with his own hand. Only the person that made a donation toward the construction of the school was entitled to the sacred gift. Luang Pu would never give it to anyone that did not make a donation because he was doing this for the temple not for himself.

On one occasion, His Holiness Somdej Pa asked Luang Pu for the sacred gifts to take with him to the countryside so that he could give the gift to anyone that wished to have it. Luang Pu said, "***You can't do that. Each of my sacred gifts is of exceptional quality. Whoever wants it must come to get it himself. If you just give them away like that, you will turn what is genuine into something artificial and worthless.***" Luang Pu also added, "***Fear not, for there would be more donators than the 84,000 gifts produced.***" And it turned out exactly as Luang Pu had foretold. Initially, the news about the sacred gifts were known only to the people that worshipped at Wat Paknam, but once the supernatural powers of the sacred gifts began to be witnessed by so many donators, the news about the sacred gifts spread automatically and to every

corner of the country. Multitudes flocked to Wat Paknam to ask Luang Pu for the sacred gifts. They came in boatloads from the countryside. Many came from abroad.

In the year B.E. 2493, the first generation of the sacred gifts numbering 84,000 were produced and each one had a designated owner and they came from everywhere to receive the gift from Luang Pu's hand. When half of the first generation gifts had been given out Luang Pu ordered the second generation gifts numbering 84,000 to be produced in B.E. 2494. After half of the second generation gifts had been given out, Luang Pu fell ill (B.E. 2499) and he assigned the Venerable Phrakrusamanadhamsamadan (Tira Klausuwan)<sup>48</sup> to hand out the gifts in his place. Luang Pu ordered the third generation gifts numbering 84,000 to be produced during his illness. All three generations gifts had been claimed by their rightful owners.

The first generation gifts had been imbibed with the supernatural powers of Phra Dhammakayas beginning on the first day of the 8<sup>th</sup> waning moon and ending on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> waxing moon. Luang Pu began giving them out to donators on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> waning moon in B.E. 2493 on his Birthday Anniversary at the Upasatha Hall of Wat Paknam.

The second generation gifts were produced in B.E. 2494, but were handed out in B.E. 2497.

The third generation gifts were produced in B.E. 2499, but were handed out in B.E. 2505.

In those days, Luang Pu gave out the sacred gifts according to the following schedule:

**In the morning:** After the morning meal

**In the afternoon:** After the midday meal from 1 p.m. onward and until 3 p.m. on days that a lot of people came to receive their gifts.

**In the evening:** After 5 p.m. onward.

When many people came to receive the sacred gifts, Luang Pu would give the gifts out at the Upasatha Hall. There would be monks to instruct people to enter the hall through the front door and leave through the back door. When the hall was full, Luang Pu would order the front door closed. When enough people had left the hall, the front door would be re-opened once again to admit more people. In those days, Wat Paknam was as full of life as a place of life entertainment.

Each day, Luang Pu had to spend hundreds of times explaining to people the way to request the sacred gift to work for them. This was especially so on Visakha Puja Day where about 1,500 people came to Wat Paknam to receive the sacred gifts. In B.E. 2496, Wat Paknam bought a tape recorder in order to record Luang Pu's voice as a means to help spare his strength.

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<sup>48</sup> His pupils called him Luang Por Lek. He was later given the monastic title of Phrabhavanakosalathera. He was the headmaster in both Scriptures Study and meditation practice. He passed away in B.E. 2511.

Luang Pu had two ways to explain the information. The first way took about an hour and contained the information in detail. The second way took about 15 minutes. The shorter recording was played when there were many people or when the people could only stay a short while. Luang Pu said that the tape recorder did help him out very much.

Luang Pu had the following to say about the sacred gifts:

“All of you men and women have given your time to come and donate money to the construction of Phrapariyati School. You have contributed a permanent structure toward the Buddhist Cause. This building belongs to Buddhism. Whoever contributes to the wealth of Buddhism will receive endless material wealth in return.

All of you that have donated 25 bahts, 30 bahts, or 50 bahts in accordance with the level of your faith can be said to have given yourself lasting benefits. You will receive these benefits in future lifetimes. Money that is deposited in Buddhism will result in material wealth throughout countless lifetimes. As a human being, you will be blessed with material wealth in the Human Realm. As a celestial being, you will be blessed with material wealth in the celestial Realm. Within the Sense Sphere, you will be blessed with endless material wealth. This is because you have supported the Buddhist Faith.

On the part of Buddhism, it will repay your generosity with a gift. This is a sacred gift whose supernatural powers have yet to ever be witnessed before now. It is truly beyond all expectations.

This speaker<sup>49</sup> has requested the countless Lord Buddhas that exist as countless Dhammakayas in Nibbana to request the Lord Buddhas in countless Nibbanas to help produce these sacred gifts. Phra Dhammakayas within this human form<sup>50</sup> also joined in the work by doing everything that the Lord Buddhas did. The work had been done continuously since the first day of the Rains-Retreat until the day the Rains-Retreat ended without stopping even for just one second. In the morning, after the Rains-Retreat ended, the Lord Buddhas pronounced the work on the sacred gifts to be completed. The very first Lord Buddha said, “Objects imbued with such supernatural powers have only just come into existence here on earth for the first time.” Having heard this statement, I have calculated each sacred gift’s supernatural powers and found them to be incalculable.

This speaker started to give out the sacred gifts on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of the waning moon which fell on this speaker’s birthday. Since then reports of their supernatural powers have begun to come in. One recipient of the sacred gift is a woman named Mrs. Keow Bangpai. She is more than 80 years old. After she took the sacred gift home, she tied it to the top of her mosquito net. When darkness fell, a very bright light suddenly lit up the entire house. Everyone in the house was completely amazed and went around looking for the source of the light. Finally, the light retreated

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<sup>49</sup> Luang Pu often times referred to himself as this speaker.

<sup>50</sup> It means Luang Pu’s physical body.

to one spot on top of the mosquito net where Mrs. Keow has secured the sacred gift and she realized that the bright light was emanating from it. The next morning, she came to see this speaker and reported that there was a bright light in her house last night and it emanated from the sacred gift. At first, they had no idea where the light was coming from, but some time later all the light retreated to the sacred gift and the gift shone brilliantly. When Mrs. Keow came to receive the sacred gift, she was still afflicted with many illnesses. Yet overnight, her body returned to normalcy and glowing with health. She felt that the sacred gift has performed a miracle by turning something bad into something good. She has found its supernatural powers to be beyond belief.”

Recipients of the sacred gift have all experienced its supernatural powers in so many different ways. Some recipients find to their amazement how much their business has improved significantly. One recipient fell down from a tall palm tree without sustaining an injury. One recipient was involved in a fatal accident in which he was the sole survivor. In all the cases involving serious accidents, only those wearing the sacred gift around their neck survive. The sacred gift’s supernatural powers are especially evident in the case of the Thai soldiers that were sent to fight in Korea during the Korean War. Luang Pu said, “In Korea, a group of British and American soldiers were talking among themselves and some Thai soldiers were standing close by when a bomb was launched into their midst and everyone there was killed except for the Thai soldier who was wearing the sacred gift around his neck. This Thai soldier was later decorated by the Allies. These incidents attest to the supernatural powers of the sacred gift.”

Another story appeared in the Bangkok Time on Monday, May 23, B.E. 2503, Year 6, Week 280. It was the story of Lance Corporal Vasana Ahkomvatana of the 21<sup>st</sup> battalion. He wrote from Korea about the supernatural powers of the two sacred gifts that he and his friend received from Luang Pu:

“The enemy’s cannonball struck the arsenal and the gasoline containers burst into flames and lit up the entire area. Soldiers had to run for cover. All the weapons and steel equipment were destroyed in the fire. A soldier friend of mine has left his sacred gift behind in the bunker. Late in the morning after the fire died down, we went back to the bunker. Amidst the destruction, we found to our amazement that the sacred gift which has been wrapped in a handkerchief was still intact and hanging from the steel post. We also located another sacred gift which came from Wat Paknam. It was still intact as well. However, all the other amulets from other temples were completely destroyed. I myself have escaped death in the battlefield several times in spite of the daily occurrence of close-ranged shootings. Sometimes, I am in the line of fire and cannot easily rest my mind at my center, I merely chant ‘samma araham’ and think of Luang Pu. That is enough to keep me and my Thai comrades safe.”



### **Bomb-Dislocation Strategy**

During WWII, Luang Pu directed his pupils of Vijja Dhammakaya to help the country by hiding the city as well as strategically important locations from the bombs by camouflaging them so that they looked like the forest or the sea. Luang Pu supervised the work himself all day and all night long. One pupil that was instrumental in employing Vijja Dhammakaya to protect the country was Master Nun Chandra Khonnokyoong or more commonly referred to as Khun Yai.

On one occasion, Luang Pu asked Khun Yai what time the bombing would begin. Khun Yai checked the situation out with her Dhammakaya-Eye and found that it would begin at 1 a.m. And it was exactly at 1 a.m. that the siren sounded. Khun Yai employed Vijja Dhammakaya to dislocate bombs and send them to the sea as commanded by Luang Pu. In those days, one newspaper reported that some people saw a nun high up in the sky diverting bombs. Some time later, many survivors of WWII living near Sapanput Bridge were asked about the incident reported in the newspaper and they said that they did see the image of a nun with their own eyes.

Two days after WWII ended, Luang Pu called a meeting of his pupils and gave Khun Yai the one and only compliment on her Vijja Dhammakaya prowess. Luang Pu said, “Chandra is peerless.”

## The Sangha Power

### Luang Pu's Only Mantra "Cessation"

The supernatural powers of monks during the Lord Buddha's time up until the present days do not appear out of nothing. This fact also applies to Luang Pu. Luang Pu's supernatural powers came as a result of his right practice which had been accumulated all throughout his previous existences as well as in the present existence.

Mr. Sutam Janklud wrote in his journal that on one occasion he went to see Luang Pu while Luang Pu was having his midday meal at the old pavilion. He approached Luang Pu to ask for holy water just as he had done with the monks in other temples. Luang Pu said to him, *"Here at Wat Paknam, we don't have any incantation. We don't have any holy water. All we have is stillness within stillness. Do you want the bark or the core?"* Luang Pu's words attested to the fact that his supernatural powers occurred as a result of having achieved elevated meditative attainments through the practice of Vijja Dhammakaya.

### Healing Illnesses

An excerpt from the book "Luang Por Sodh Wat Paknam", "The Most Venerable Phrathepsinghaburajarn (Jaran Thitadhammo), the Ecclesiastical Provincial Governor of Sing Buri Province, who was once Luang Pu's pupil at Wat Paknam, said that at 2 p.m. many lay people would come to see Luang Pu to ask for help with their various complaints. Luang Pu told the people to write down their name, birth date, and illness on a piece of paper and dropped it into the alms-bowl. Luang Pu then took the pieces of paper to the monks and nuns that practiced Vijja Dhammakaya at the Vijja Dhammakaya Workshop so that they could use Vijja Dhammakaya to help cure the illnesses."

*This method required expert practitioners of Vijja Dhammakaya to search for the individual's past misdeed(s) which caused him/her to fall ill. This method addresses the illness at its root cause. Luang Pu was like an expert physician who knew about every disease, its root cause, and its cure. Luang Pu also knew each patient's life history not only in the current existence but in his previous existences as well. It is for these reasons that Luang Pu could cure the diseases directly and quickly.*

Among the large number of patients that came to see Luang Pu, two were especially serious. One of them had tuberculosis and another had leprosy. In those days, there was no cure for either disease. Luang Pu taught these two patients to practice meditation while he employed Vijja Dhammakaya to help them until both were cured of their diseases. Moreover, they were able to attain Phra Dhammakaya as well. The news about the successful healing of these two

patients spread like wildfire and Luang Pu's reputation as a great healer became known to more and more people as a result. It was not surprising therefore that more and more people came to Luang Pu for help at Wat Paknam.

### **Overpowering Black Magic**

Mr. Somjit Chamrasami was at one time ordained as a novice monk at Wat Paknam. He was then 18 years old. He told us that one day some people brought a medium to see Luang Pu. The medium had some treasures buried in the ground underneath his house. Someone wanted him dead so that he could claim the buried treasures. Luang Pu told a novice monk that was sitting close to him to go into meditation. Right at that moment, a wax doll came flying through the open window and into the room. The medium screamed. Luang Pu went outside his kuti to fetch a thick glass jar and used it to cover the wax doll. However, the wax doll could still move quickly and was moving toward the medium. Several novice monks obstructed its path until the magic spell dissipated and the wax doll disappeared into thin air. The person that made the wax doll was an expert in black magic and had been hired for tens of thousands of bahts to kill the medium. After all was said and done, the medium crawled toward Luang Pu to pay him a deep homage and thank him for having saved his life.

### **Turning His Face into Gold**

The Abbot of Wat Lampraya told us that when he was a boy living at Wat Paknam, his duty was to help Luang Pu receive visitors. One day, three monks that had been undertaking Dhutanga came to see Luang Pu because they wanted to learn black magic from Luang Pu. They asked Luang Pu to show them a bit of black magic. Luang Pu fashioned two dolls from clay and placed them apart from each other. Luang Pu looked at the dolls without doing anything and the dolls started to move and run into each other. Next, Luang Pu had a strip of bamboo fetched from the kitchen and made an arrow with it. Within a minute, the arrow started to move as though it was going to take flight. Luang Pu said that if he blew at it, it would start to fly. These magic tricks did not thrill the monks because they had probably seen things like these before.

Next, Luang Pu had his bathing cloth fetched and looked at it for a minute. He then used the cloth to wipe his face in an upward motion. As soon as Luang Pu removed the cloth, his face turned into gold. After a moment, he used the bathing cloth to wipe his face in a downward motion and the gold disappeared. That did the trick. All three monks paid Luang Pu a deep homage and asked to learn the magic from Luang Pu. Luang Pu refused to teach it and said that the knowledge belonged outside of Buddhism and could not lead the learner to Nibbana. Luang Pu explained that he had altogether forsaken all such knowledge and encouraged the monks to learn "*samma araham*" instead because the knowledge could lead them to the Path and Fruit of Nibbana.

### **Accelerating the Growth of Fruits**

One of Luang Pu's followers told Mrs. Kimsui Sae-Lee and Mr. Tanu Manachaiyarak about the most miraculous happenings in her life. She said that when Luang Pu was still living, she had faithfully and regularly rowed her boat to make merit at Wat Paknam for thirty consecutive years until she came to know Luang Pu very well.

One day around B.E. 2480, the owner of the land where she had her orchard wanted to cancel the lease and wanted her and her family to move out. She and her husband wanted to buy a parcel of land, which was over four rais and located in Soi Suanpak in Bangkhunnon. The problem was that she only had some 3,000 bahts in cash and still needed about 13,000 bahts more in order to purchase the land. She asked Luang Pu for a loan, but Luang Pu said, "Where can I find such an amount of money?" The woman was under the impression that Luang Pu had no wish to help her and hurried back to the pier. Luang Pu laughed and walked her to the pier. At the same time, Luang Pu told her to water her guava trees and she would have enough money to buy her land. Upon her return to the orchard, she decided to water six guava trees out of all the trees in the orchard, which covered more than five rais even though she did not really believe in Luang Pu's words.

In the morning, she was completely stunned because overnight the six guava trees became laden with fruits and they were all large ones. She told her son and her husband to pick the fruits and sell them. She herself stayed behind to water the rest of the guava trees in the orchard. It turned out that all the trees in the orchard became laden with large fruits. She said that her husband and her son carried baskets of guava fruits to and fro the market until their feet were all swollen. She said that whoever saw the fruits wanted to buy them and they were all sold out in a few days. She found to her complete amazement that the sales of the fruits provided her with enough money to buy her land and then some.

However, after having bought the land, she was faced with a new problem. She did not have enough money left with which to build a house. Once again, she asked Luang Pu for a loan. This time Luang Pu told her to water her vegetable garden at the back of her house. When she returned home, she watered the small patch of Chinese lettuce behind her house. As soon as she watered the plants, they grew immediately right before her eyes. She was both stunned and amazed. She called her husband and son to come and bear witness to the miracle. Amazingly, the sales of the Chinese lettuce eventually provided her with enough money to have her house built.

### **Supernormal Insight**

Luang Pu possessed supernatural insight and it allowed him to know the past and the future. Luang Pu could boldly and confidently say the things that he saw with his insight and foretell accurately the things that concerned him, his pupils, Wat Paknam, the country, and the world.

Five years before Luang Pu passed away, he called a special meeting of his followers both within and outside the temple. The meeting was held at the Study Hall. Luang Pu called the meeting in order to inform his followers of his passing five years hence. He asked them to continue with the work that he had started. He also informed them of the plan he had in mind to complete the restoration of Wat Paknam.

Luang Pu foretold that the Most Venerable Phradhamdilok (Pun Punnasiri) of Wat Phra Chetuphon would one day be the leader of monks. Thirteen years after Luang Pu's passing in B.E. 2515, the most venerable was appointed His Holiness the Supreme Patriarch (Somdej Phraariyavongsacatayan). His Holiness was more commonly referred to as Somdej Pa. The accuracy of Luang Pu's predictions was well known. His Holiness Somdej Pa came to pay a special homage to Luang Pu's body at Wat Paknam on August 8, B.E. 2515. He told the congregation on that occasion, *"I've come here today in order to make a special offering and pay special homage to Luang Por (meaning Luang Pu). What Luang Por had foretold about me is now a reality. Everything happens exactly as Luang Por predicted. Now, I am the leader of monks just as Luang Por foretold over a decade ago. It is the reason why I am here today to pay him special homage."*

Luang Pu also foretold that the Most Venerable Somdej Pramaharajamangalajarn (Chuang Varapunno), the current Abbot of Wat Paknam, would be the next Abbot of Wat Paknam when the most venerable was just a young novice monk.

At one point, Luang Pu's followers could not help, but notice how Luang Pu's kuti had become so dilapidated. They wanted Luang Pu to have a more comfortable lodging so they raised funds to have a brick building built for Luang Pu. This building is called "Monkolcandasara". During its construction, Luang Pu would sometimes come out to sit and watch the workers. When someone asked Luang Pu what he thought of the building, he would always say, "It is being built for Chuang." As it turned out, this building has been used as the kuti of the Most Venerable Somdej Pramaharajamangalajarn, the current Abbot of Wat Paknam.

In those days, Wat Paknam could not be accessed by road and people had to get there either by boat or on foot. Wat Paknam used to have only walk-paths within its grounds. Later, Luang Pu decided to have a road built so that people could in the future get to the temple by car. People could not understand why Luang Pu wanted such a road built, but Luang Pu told them that in the future people would arrive at the temple by car. People found it difficult to believe Luang Pu's words at the time because they could not see how that could possibly happen. Some people even commented how it would not happen not even after a hundred years. But, then only two years after Luang Pu's passing, there were cars parked in the temple's parking lot just as Luang Pu had foretold.

When Mr. Somjit Chamrasami was about 18 years old and still living in Angtong Province, he was sleeping when he heard Luang Pu's voice telling him to go to Wat Paknam. Mr. Somjit did not believe that he really heard Luang Pu's voice because he did not believe in

such things, but then he heard Luang Pu's voice again. This time Luang Pu said, "Hey, in the future people will no longer have to cook rice in a clay pot, but they will use a magic pot that works by just the push of a button. They will have divine ear and divine eye too." Of course Mr. Somjit did not believe anything he heard until the invention of the rice cooker, telephone and television some time later.

Luang Pu also told Mr. Somjit that in the future there would be three-seasoned castles (air-conditioned condominium buildings), roads instead of canals (traveling by car instead of by boat), and roads would appear like noodles made from fermented rice flour (expressway). Luang Pu had foretold things that happened decades later. He foretold how the Bang-na Road would in the future become a major roadway that would go all the way to Chonburi Province and Trad Province. In those days, Bang-na Road was just a narrow road surrounded by rice paddies and dotted in the distance by villages.

During WWII, there were hordes of red ants that fought each other to the death. At the sign, Luang Pu foretold that the war would end within 7 days and that prediction also came to pass.

Luang Pu had a follower his name was Major General Sophon Karalai. He had come to worship at Wat Paknam since B.E. 2480 when he was just a lieutenant. After he married Miss Prathum, she also became Luang Pu's follower. When their first child was about eight months old, Luang Pu sent someone to the military family housing to warn the lieutenant that his child would become seriously ill. Mrs. Prathum wondered how sick her child would get when he appeared quite healthy at the time. Still, she took special precautions to care for her child. However, a few days later, the child suddenly came down with severe dysentery and the physician in charge feared that the child might not survive.

Major General Sophon wrote his child's condition down on a piece of paper and submitted it to Luang Pu. Luang Pu gave the piece of paper to his Vija Dhammakaya pupils. Luang Pu told the child's father, "They (Phya Mara) want to take it (the child). We're going to have to fight a bit, but we'll be able to save it." Later that day, the child's father submitted its condition to Luang Pu for the second time.<sup>51</sup> As soon as Luang Pu read the piece of paper, he declared that the child had been saved. The child's condition gradually improved until it was finally well again.

When Luang Pu fell gravely ill around the end of B.E. 2501, Major General Sophon (at the time he assumed the rank of major) and Mrs. Prathum came to Wat Paknam to visit Luang Pu more frequently. One day during the major's visit, Luang Pu told a novice monk to fetch a crystal sphere for him. With the crystal sphere in hand, Luang Pu surveyed everyone in the room before he stopped and looked directly at the major. Luang Pu wanted the major to

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<sup>51</sup> In those days, one can submit the information about a person's illness three times a day: In the morning, at noon, and in the evening.

approach him. Luang Pu said to him, *“This Kayasidhi<sup>52</sup> is called ‘Baromachakra’ and it has kept everyone at Wat Paknam fed in all these years. I have also employed this Kayasidhi in researching Vija Dhammakaya. And now I wish to give it to you. Be sure to take it with you wherever you go.”*

Major General Sophon said that he had felt most deeply moved to have been given such an important crystal sphere by Luang Pu. But, then when he returned home, his delight and joy began to subside because he wondered if Luang Pu really wished to give the crystal sphere to him. He doubted if such an important treasure should come to someone like him.

The next day the major made up his mind to return the ‘Baromachakra’ Sphere to Luang Pu. He went inside Luang Pu’s kuti and waited for the right time to approach Luang Pu in order to return the valuable crystal sphere to him. But, before he had a chance to do anything, once again Luang Pu looked at everyone in the room and told a novice monk to fetch him another crystal sphere. Luang Pu nodded to the major to come closer. Luang Pu then said to him, “You must not return the crystal sphere to me. In fact, I’m giving you another one. This one is called ‘Chakrapat’. Keep this one at home because your material wealth is about to perish. This Kayasidhi will help protect you.” At this statement, the major was certain that Luang Pu wanted to give him the crystal spheres because he foresaw calamitous events about to happen to him and his family. Luang Pu knew that his time of passing was near and wanted to help the major while he still could. After Luang Pu’s passing, Major General Sopon and his family had met with so many serious problems in their work and businesses that nearly all of their accumulated material wealth was wiped out. Everything happened exactly as Luang Pu had foretold.

The next story has to do with the noblewoman, Khun Ying Lamune Burakamkovit, the wife of Major Luang Burakamkovit, former Director General of the Department of Public and Municipal Works and Deputy Minister of the Ministry of the Interior in the government of Prime Minister Field Marshall P. Piboonsongkram. Khun Ying was one of Luang Pu’s followers and frequently consulted with Luang Pu about her problems.

Once, one of her children fell gravely ill and Khun Ying requested Luang Pu to come to her house to help cure her child. Luang Pu did as requested and told his Vija Dhammakaya pupils to help the sick child as well. Luang Pu foretold that Khun Ying would in the future become one of the major supporters of Wat Paknam.

Later, it turned out that Khun Ying, who was firmly planted in the Triple Gem and a devout follower of Luang Pu, came to stay at Wat Paknam for months at a time in order to practice meditation and observe the Eight Precepts. She donated a parcel of land (143 rais) in the province of Nakornnayok to Wat Paknam. She had also been the leader of Kathina-Offering at

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<sup>52</sup> Kayasidhi in this case is a type of crystal spheres which is part of the treasures of a Universal Monarch. These include the Precious Elephant, the Precious Steed, the Precious Warlord, the Precious Lord of Finance, the Precious Lady, the Precious Sphere, and the Precious Wheel.

Wat Paknam for many consecutive years. She had donated a great deal of money to fund many construction and renovation projects at Wat Paknam as well.

### **Appearing in Dreams**

Although Luang Pu has been gone for a long time now, yet people are still experiencing his supernormal powers. One example occurred in the middle of B.E. 2518. Mrs. Chaluay Lekprayoon, who was a devout Buddhist and had supported Wat Paknam for years, decided one day that she would stop donating money to Wat Paknam seeing how it already had more than enough supporters. One night, she dreamt that Luang Pu appeared to her. In her dream, Luang Pu was carrying a shining gold alms-bowl. This dream convinced Mrs. Chaluay to continue supporting Wat Paknam.



## Luang Pu's Dhamma Lectures

Luang Pu's Dhamma lectures are highly precious. Most of Luang Pu's lectures contained instructions on how to practice meditation in order to attain Phra Dhammakaya and how to live life in such a way as to fulfill the true objective of life. The following Dhamma lectures are but just a few examples of Luang Pu's many Dhamma lectures and are presented here so that the student will have a better idea of how to practice according to the Lord Buddha's Teachings.

### **Putting Our Life on the Line**

“Cessation is the key to success as shown in the Lord Buddha's saying, “Samana has already ceased, but you have not.” You must first make sure that you can achieve cessation. There's no need to talk about anything elaborate just yet. Let's agree first on the concept of cessation. This ability to still one's mind has been demonstrated here at Wat Paknam by more than 80 people. If cessation is not achieved, Phra Dhammakaya cannot be attained. Now, if more than 80 people here can attain Phra Dhammakaya, you as a human being, why can't you also attain Phra Dhammakaya? If you are truly earnest, why won't you be able to do it? The simple fact is that you can't attain Phra Dhammakaya because you are not truly earnest. If you are truly earnest, then you can do it. How earnest must you be? How about as earnest as putting your life on the line? Let your flesh and blood dry up, leaving only bones and skin, you will not rise from your seat until you can attain Phra Dhammakaya. I assure you that if you can be this earnest, then you can attain Phra Dhammakaya.”<sup>53</sup>

### **Once Your Mind Is Clear and Bright, Money Will Automatically Flow into Your Life.**

“If your mind can cease all of its activity, it will be as clear and bright as a mirror. Such a clear and bright mind is our true blessing, Mongala Uttaman, because it is the true source of prosperity. If your mind is still, then making money will not be at all difficult. If your mind is clear and bright, you won't have to work hard to earn a lot of money. You won't have any financial hardship because money will flow in and very little will flow out. The key here is a clear and bright mind. If a householder wants to have a lot of material wealth, he must keep his mind clear and bright and doesn't allow anything or anyone to perturb it. Let the mind be blissful always. Let the mind focus constantly on its own clarity and brightness, then money and other material wealth will automatically flow into your life.”<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Taken from the Dhamma lecture entitled ‘How to Practice Meditation, Samatha and Vipassana’.

<sup>54</sup> Taken from the Dhamma lecture entitled ‘The Mongala Sutta’ given on April 25, B.E. 2497

## **Dhatudhamma**

“Whether the Lord Buddha happens or not, all the Dhatudhamma has already existed. It has already manifested itself in living beings that are undergoing the four different modes of birth which include Andaja (birth through the egg), Sansedaja (birth through moisture), Opatatika (birth through spontaneous rising), and Jalabuja (birth through the womb). Living beings are made up of Dhatudhamma. They are a product of Dhatudhamma in the same way that grass, plants, and trees are. Without Dhatudhamma, there can be no life as we know it.

Human beings, males and females, are all made up of Dhatudhamma. No life can exist without Dhatudhamma. These products of Dhatudhamma are called Sankhara. Some are Punnabhisankhara. Some are Apunnabhisakhara. Some are Anenjabhisankhara. Punnabhisankhara refers to Sankhara that is beautiful, good, and pleasing. Apunnabhisakhara refers to Sankhara that is not beautiful, not good, and not pleasing. Anenjabhisankhara refers to Sankhara which is imperturbable, such as, those of the Non-Form Brahma Beings in the Nevasannanasannayatana Realm or the Asanni Beings that have attained the Fourth Form Jhana and are now dwelling in the eleventh realm of the Form Brahma Realm.”<sup>55</sup>

## **Heedlessness – Heedfulness**

“Heedlessness means the loss of mindfulness. Heedfulness means mindfulness. A person that exercises heedfulness can be said to possess Adhisila (higher morality), Adhiscitta (higher mentality), and Adhipanna (higher wisdom).

In His final advice, the Lord Buddha told us not to be heedless, but to exercise heedfulness instead. We must constantly bear in mind how everything undergoes decay and how all of us are born alone and will die alone.

All of our forefathers are now gone. They are all dead. We know that we too will also die one day. Therefore, we must hasten to perform all manners of wholesome deeds while we can. But, if we refuse to be mindful of these facts of life, we will think nothing of committing unwholesome deeds, of verbally abusing our elders, etc. Therefore, it is very important that we exercise heedfulness at all times.”<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Taken from the Dhamma lecture entitled “the Dhammaniyam Sutta” given on January 32, B.E. 2497

<sup>56</sup> Taken from the Dhamma lecture entitled “Pacchimavaca” given on February 18, B.E. 2497

## **Our Parents' Valuable Words**

“Our parents’ words, however harsh they may be, are genuinely valuable. They may speak to us harshly at times out of their wish to prevent us from misbehaving or committing bad deeds. Our parents’ words are valuable because they encourage us to change our way and prevent us from misbehaving ourselves.”<sup>57</sup>

## **The Seventh Base of the Body**

“The seventh base of the body has five different centers: One in the middle, one at the front, one on the right, one at the back, and one on the left.

The one in the middle is called the air element.

The one at the front is called the water element.

The one on the right is called the earth element.

The one at the back is called the fire element.

The one on the left is called the wind element.

The clean, clear space right in the middle is called the center.

Why is it called the center? The center of the Dhamma Sphere is where every living being must come to rest when it dies and again when it is reborn. The Refined Human Body dwells in the middle of the Dhamma Sphere during rebirth to wait for the parents to perform the act. When conditions are right, the Refined Human Body falls into the center. The Dhamma Sphere rises up to the seventh base, which lies at two fingers breadth above the navel inside the body. The Dhamma Sphere is a clear sphere as clear as a mirror and has the size of an egg yolk.

This center is crucially important. To seek rebirth after death, the Refined Human Body has to depart from this point. To attain Nibbana, one has to go through this point as well.

Rebirth and death travel in opposite directions. At death, one must leave the body from the center. At birth, one must enter the body at the center. To end rebirth, one must enter the center by keeping the mind absolutely still all the way until one attains Nibbana.”<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Taken from the Dhamma lecture entitled “Principles of Service and Social Integration” given on December 24, B.E. 2497

<sup>58</sup> Taken from the Dhamma lecture entitled “How to practice meditation, Samatha and Vipassana”

## **Cessation and the Center**

“One’s mind must be still before it can arrive at the center. There is an old saying:

*The mind is still and sees the center. That’s the way it has to be.*

*Impermanence is a fact of life. It is a sure thing.*

*Death leads to rebirth. Round and round it goes.*

*Sankhara cannot last except when defilements can be extinguished.*

This center is crucially important. Rebirth can occur only by entering the center. The birth process requires the working together of the physical world and the Dhamma world. For the Dhamma world, the mind must come to a standstill and falls into the center.

Once the mind is still, it falls into the center and sees there a clear sphere the size of the moon or the sun. The mind can ‘see’ the center once it is still”<sup>59</sup>

## **From Anatta (the Absence of True Selfhood) to Atta (the Presence of True Selfhood)**

“Why did the Lord Buddha emphasize Aniccan (impermanence), Dukkhan (suffering), Anatta (the absence of true selfhood)? Having contemplated this matter, I came to the conclusion that the Lord Buddha wanted us to consider this particular teaching in this way.

He talked about ‘Aniccan’ (impermanence) in order to encourage us to seek ‘Niccan’ (permanence).

He talked about ‘Dukkhan’ (suffering) in order to encourage us to seek ‘Sukhan’ (happiness).

He talked about ‘Anatta’ (the absence of true selfhood) in order to encourage us to seek ‘Atta’ (the presence of true selfhood).

An intelligent person equipped with contemplative power will realize that this teaching is about a comparison. For example, there are two men standing together, one is tall and the other is short. Someone asks if we know both men. We answer that we know the tall man. This answer implies already that we don’t know the short man without having to spell it out. Likewise, Aniccan implies Niccan, Dukkhan implies Sukhan, and Anatta implies Atta.

What then is Niccan, Sukhan, and Atta?

Dhammakaya is Niccan, Sukhan, and Atta. Dhammakaya is the embodiment of Niccan, Sukhan and Atta.”<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Taken from the Dhamma lecture entitled “How to practice meditation, Samatha and Vipassana”

### **Alms-Giving Makes the World Go Round**

“The practice of alms-giving is what keeps the world goes around. We can live together in peace because we are giving to each other. Without the practice of alms-giving, the Buddhist monks and novice monks will be in serious trouble. When we practice alms-giving, we are giving happiness to each other. Parents give to their children and enable them to grow. When our parents are old and decrepit, it is our turn to care for them. Thus are the ways that the human race has practiced alms-giving.”<sup>61</sup>

### **Merit Resides in Every Inner Body**

“Today each donator has given alms to individuals who have attained Phra Dhammakaya and realized innumerable Dhammakayas. Therefore, the merit earned by your alms-giving is truly incalculable and the earned merit goes to reside in the Dhamma Sphere which gives rise to your human body. This sphere is pure and clear and it is the size of an egg-yolk. The earned merit also shows up in the Dhamma Sphere which gives rise to the Refined Human Body.

Moreover, it shows up in the Dhamma Sphere of the Coarse and Refined Celestial Bodies, the Coarse and Refined Form Brahma Bodies, the Coarse and Refined Non-Form Brahma Bodies, the Coarse and Refined Gotrabhu Dhammakayas, the Coarse and Refined Sotapanna Dhammakayas, the Coarse and Refined Sakadagami Dhammakayas, the Coarse and Refined Anagami Dhammakayas, and finally the Coarse and Refined Arahat Dhammakayas as well as the countless Arahat Dhammakayas.

The merit earned from just this alms-giving has given rise to a string of Merit Spheres the length of 1,000 Nibbana-wahs. Once the alms have been given, they now belong to the recipients to do whatever they want with them. In the meantime, the earned merit flows into the middle of the Dhamma Sphere, which gives rise to the alms-giver’s body. The sphere is pure and clear. The effect is akin to flipping the light switch on.”<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Taken from the Dhamma lecture entitled “The Buddha-Virtue, the Dhamma-Virtue, the Sangha-Virtue”

<sup>61</sup> Taken from the Dhamma lecture entitled “Bhattanutmodanagatha” given on Januray 16, B.E. 2498

<sup>62</sup> Taken from the Dhamma lecture entitled “Bhattanutmodanagatha” given on May 9, B.E. 2497



Master Nun Chandra Khonnokyoong  
The Perpetuator of Vijja Dhammakaya

**Part 2**  
**The Life History**  
**of Master Nun Chandra Khonnokyoong**  
**The Perpetuator of Vijja Dhammakaya**

# **PART 2**

## **The Life History of Master Nun Chandra Khonnokyoong, the Perpetuator of Vijja Dhammakaya**

- **Khun Yai's Younger Years**

Khun Yai's Childhood

Khun Yai Was No Ordinary Child

The Incident that Prompted Khun Yai to Embark upon the Path of Dhamma

Searching for the Dhamma

Studying Vijja Dhammakaya

Meeting Her Late Father

- **Life at Wat Paknam**

Entering the Realm of Vijja Dhammakaya

Practicing Vijja Dhammakaya

Khun Yai Was Peerless



- **Perpetuating Vijja Dhammakaya**

Luang Pu's Command

Meeting the Heir of Vijja Dhammakaya, the Future Luang Por Dhammajayo

Khun Yai's Supernatural Powers

Luang Por Holds Khun Yai in High Regards

Gathering Team Members

The Birth of Dhammaprasit House

Encouraging Her Pupils to Practice Chastity

Khun Yai Coached the Team Members

Luang Por Dhammajayo's Ordination

- **Founding Wat Phra Dhammakaya**

Finding Land for the Temple

Starting the Construction

Luang Por Dattajivo's Ordination

The Initial Phase of Propagating Vijja Dhammakaya

Khun Yai's Foresight

Teaching Her Pupils

Khun Yai's Humility

Paying Homage to Luang Pu

Building the Great Dhammakaya Cetiya

Khun Yai's Passing

- **Khun Yai's Teachings**

Not Pretty At All

One Drop at a Time Can Eventually Fill the Water Jar to the Brim

Overcome Phya Mara with Goodness

I Fight Every Battle in Life with Merit

I Defer to Everyone

We Should Do Things So That We Can Be Praiseworthy

Taking Good Care of Things

The Reason that I Can Practice Vijja Dhammakaya

Keeping My Possessions Safe

I Respect Rules and Orders

## Concepts

Khun Yai's supernatural powers are legendary and it has been witnessed by many of her followers. Khun Yai is the founder of Wat Phra Dhammakaya, a place of worship where hundreds of thousands of people come to give alms, keep the Precepts, and practice meditation. There are now many Wat Phra Dhammakaya branches worldwide. Khun Yai had the innate ability to teach and coach people of every social class, every educational background, every character type, despite the fact that Khun Yai had no formal education. Khun Yai knew how to use the Lord Buddha's Teachings to guide people to meet with happiness and prosperity.

Khun Yai was a person of few words, but her every word was valuable. They were words of a true sage. They were words which came from genuine love and kindness. Khun Yai is an exceptional role model for Buddhists. She had the ability to differentiate right from wrong at a very young age and had endeavored to train herself in everything from something as mundane as doing daily chores to something as profound as researching Vijja Dhammakaya. Everything that Khun Yai thought, said, and did was for the purpose of attaining the Path and Fruit of Nibbana. When Khun Yai taught anyone, her teaching came from the depth of her enlightened Knowledge.

Khun Yai had the rare ability of turning many of her pupils' lives into something truly exceptional. Most distinctive among her pupils are the Most Venerable Phrarajbhavanavisudh (Luang Por Dhammajayo), the Abbot of Wat Phra Dhammakaya, and the Most Venerable Phrabhavanaviriyakhun (Luang Por Dattajivo), the Vice-Abbot of Wat Phra Dhammakaya. Some of her pupils also included many monks and senior monks as well as novice monks. These worthwhile individuals have dedicated their lives for the cause of Buddhism and Vijja Dhammakaya. Besides the monks and novice monks, Khun Yai had also made an indelible mark on the multitudes of male and female lay devotees who are now working as Kalayanamitra or virtuous friends in every corner of the world.

## Objectives

1. To enable the student to learn about Khun Yai's life history, exemplary routine and conduct as well as the large number of contributions she has made toward Buddhism, Vijja Dhammakaya, society, the country, and the world.
2. To enable the student to learn about Khun Yai's teachings so that the student can be inspired to follow Khun Yai's example in her staunch pursuit of Perfections.

## Part 2

### The Life History of Master Nun Chandra Khonnokyoong The Perpetuator of Vija Dhammakaya

*The dark sky at night  
is giving way to the light  
that is rising from the east  
to signify that a new day is about to begin.  
Many people open their eyes when the sun has already risen.  
But, one little person is rising before dawn.  
The little rice farmer's daughter  
goes out to work in the paddy at 4 a.m. everyday.  
She is staunch of heart, decisive, and imperturbable.  
This little girl was to eventually become  
Master Nun Chandra Khonnokyoong,  
the Founder of Wat Phra Dhammakaya.*

**Her life is pure and beautiful.**

**And it is fitting that we honor her as our role model and venerated Master.**

## Khun Yai's Younger Years

### Khun Yai's Childhood

*Master Nun Chandra Khonnokyoong or Khun Yai* was born on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the 2<sup>nd</sup> waxing moon in the year of the Cock in B.E. 2452 (which corresponds to January 20, B.E. 2452)<sup>1</sup> She was the fifth child of the nine children of Mr. Ploy and Mrs. Pun in a median income family of farmers. They lived in Amphoe Nakornchaisri. The size of the family farm was about 35 rais.

Rice paddies by nature consist of mounds in certain places. When Khun Yai was a child, she used to deliver food for the adults who were working in the paddies by carrying it in two baskets suspended from the ends of a pole across her shoulder. The adults would leave the paddies to sit in a circle on the mound to have lunch together while the water buffaloes that had been working since dawn were allowed to have their grass and water.

Khun Yai was very popular among her many friends. In the evening, Khun Yai and her friends would herd the water buffaloes to the pond and bathe them before putting them in the corral.

The rice famers' lifestyle made Khun Yai very sturdy because she had to help her parents out by working in the paddies all day long. Khun Yai never had any formal education and was therefore illiterate. In those days, girls were encouraged to stay home and become a home-maker. Moreover, the system of compulsory education was not in place just yet. Khun Yai had to do both housework and farm work. She was exceptionally hard-working and her rice fields were devoid of weeds, which caused her fields to be more productive than her neighbors'.

### Khun Yai Was No Ordinary Child

Every morning around 4 a.m., Khun Yai would get up in order to go to work in the rice paddies. Khun Yai enjoyed watching the sunrise every morning. She often thought to herself, *"I wonder where the Sun came from. What will I have to do to get there?"* Khun Yai's thought showed that she was no ordinary child.

Khun Yai was very hard-working and her diligence was legendary. Some of her neighbors tried to beat her to the rice paddies, but no one could get to work earlier than her. All of Khun Yai's neighbors could not help but admire her diligence and they called her 'Iron Shins'. This nickname used to be given a person who was exceptionally hard-working, motivated, and persistent. Khun Yai helped her parents out by working in the fields until the family's economic status improved and they were debt-free.

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<sup>1</sup> The Most Venerable Luang Por Dhammajayo has designated Khun Yai's birthday to be on January 19.

## **The Incident that Prompted Khun Yai to Embark upon the Path of Dhamma**

Growing up Khun Yai had witnessed her parents' marital life, which was a mixture of happiness and pain. Her father was an alcoholic and had to drink every evening. His habit cost him ten satangs daily.

Khun Yai's father was normally a kind person, but as soon as he was drunk he would pick a fight with his wife. In the situation, Khun Yai's mother had a few choice words to say to her husband that invariably caused him to come out of his drunken stupor.

One day, the same incident occurred, but on this particular occasion, it became a life-changing experience for Khun Yai. On that day, Khun Yai's father was laying in his drunken state on the cot under the house muttering continuously to himself. Khun Yai's mother was sitting up in the house and began to feel annoyed, so she shouted down to her husband her choice words, "Hey you sparrow, you're living in another bird's nest, what are you complaining about?"

Having felt himself inferior to his wife because he came from a poorer family and having had to listen to these words all through the years, he suddenly felt that he could no longer bear hearing them again. He asked his children, "Did you hear that? Did you hear your mother calling me a sparrow living in another sparrow's nest?" His voice sounded very strained and none of the children dared say anything except for Khun Yai. Khun Yai did not want her parents to fight so she said to her father, "Now Mama didn't say such a thing at all." Upon hearing Khun Yai's words, her father became incensed and cursed Khun Yai, "Let you be deaf for 500 lifetimes."

The curse stuck in Khun Yai's memory because for Khun Yai, a parent's word is sacred. When a parent blesses his children, the blessing will come true. In the same token, when a parent curses his children, the curse will also come true. Therefore, Khun Yai was hoping to be able to follow the established custom by asking her father for forgiveness during his final moments on earth. Khun Yai did not dare do it while her father was still living for fear that she might rekindle his anger.

Not long after this incident, Khun Yai's father fell ill and remained gravely ill for several months. The children had to take turn feeding him and caring for him. On his final day, Khun Yai fed her father and went into the kitchen to have her meal before leaving on her rowboat to go and check her rice fields which were at the time laden with rice grains.

When she got home, she saw that everyone in the family was crying because her father had already passed away. Her siblings scolded her for not coming back in time to ask her father for forgiveness during his final moments. Khun Yai faced her father's passing calmly. She understood how death was part of life. However, she was still concerned about her father's curse. That was when she decided that she had to go and look for her father in the hereafter.

## Searching for the Dhamma

However many years had gone past, Khun Yai was still determined to go and look for her father in the hereafter so that she could ask him to forgive her. She also told herself that if she heard of any teacher that could teach her to go to the hereafter, she would leave everything behind to go and study with that teacher.

Around B.E. 2470 when Khun Yai was 18 years old, she heard about Luang Pu and how he could teach people to attain Phra Dhammakaya. And once a person attained Phra Dhammakaya, he could go to the Celestial Realm, the Hell Realm, and even Nibbana. He could visit his departed loved ones in the hereafter. He could touch them and talk to them. He could rescue his loved ones from the Hell Realm or deliver merit to the ones in the Celestial Realm.

Khun Yai was thrilled to hear such good news and she was determined to meet Luang Pu at Wat Paknam one day. She continued to work hard while she waited for the right time to embark upon her Dhamma quest.

Around B.E. 2478 when Khun Yai was 26 years old, she decided to give all of her material possessions which included land and precious jewelry to her siblings that included a brother who had been in the monkhood. She only had one goal in mind and that was to look for her father in the hereafter.

When she went to say goodbye to her mother and told her that she was leaving, her mother cried but the love and respect that Khun Yai had for her mother could not prevent her from leaving the house to go in search of the Dhamma.

Finally, her mother gave her two bahts for her travel expense and Khun Yai was on her way to look for a way to gain access to Wat Paknam. Khun Yai had gone to Bangkok to stay with a relative before finding out that the wealthy woman named Mrs. Liap was in the habit of offering alms to the monks at Wat Paknam regularly. As a result, Khun Yai went to apply for a household position at Mrs. Liap's house with the hope that one day she would be able to gain access to Wat Paknam.

Mrs. Liap had a large family. The family was very wealthy and owned commercial row houses several kilometers long located on both sides of one street as well as a large import-export business. Most importantly, Mrs. Liap was a benefactress of Wat Paknam and had been supporting the temple and its monastic members for twenty years by the time Khun Yai went to work for her.

Mrs. Liap liked everything in her house to be clean and neat and Khun Yai was able to keep her house exactly as Mrs. Liap liked it. Moreover, Khun Yai was conscientious, hard-working, and trustworthy. It was no wonder that eventually Mrs. Liap came to rely on Khun Yai not only to help keep her house but to also keep her treasury safe. Mrs. Liap gave the key to the family's treasury to Khun Yai by way of asking her to keep the treasury clean and the family's treasures safe.

The treasury was the place where the family's fortune which included money, gold, precious gems, etc., were kept in strong boxes. Mrs. Liap's own children were not allowed in it, but Khun Yai was allowed in to clean the room. With Khun Yai in the house, Mrs. Liap felt free to go places knowing that Khun Yai would look after the house and all of its treasures in her absence. Khun Yai was therefore loved and trusted by Mrs. Liap.

## **Studying Vijja Dhammakaya**

Mrs. Liap usually invited Khun Yai Tongsuk, one of Luang Pu's able pupils that had been sent out to teach Vijja Dhammakaya, to come to her house to teach meditation. When Khun Yai knew that Khun Yai Tongsuk could teach meditation, she wanted to be near her and to learn meditation practice from her. However, Khun Yai knew her place and understood that it was not proper for her to practice meditation together with the owner of the house. Therefore, Khun Yai was always waiting on Khun Yai Tongsuk in the hope that Khun Yai Tongsuk would one day teach her to practice meditation.

Khun Yai was willing to work harder by adding on to her normal workload at the house the task of washing and ironing Khun Yai Tongsuk's clothes. She made sure that Khun Yai Tongsuk's bed and mosquito net were clean and smelled good. She prepared meals for Khun Yai Tongsuk and did everything she could so that Khun Yai Tongsuk would be inclined to teach her meditation practice.

Khun Yai's earnest and dedicated effort eventually paid off. Khun Yai Tongsuk regarded our Khun Yai with love and kindness and one day put the question to her, "Would you like to learn meditation practice?" Khun Yai could not be happier as she answered immediately, "I would love to, but I don't dare learn it together with the owner of the house." Khun Yai Tongsuk took it upon herself to ask Mrs. Liap for permission to have Khun Yai join in the lessons. Khun Yai Tongsuk told Khun Yai to focus her mind at the seventh base of the body while chanting 'samma araham'.

During that period, Khun Yai would try to get her work done quickly so that she could have some time alone to practice meditation. However, a household servant's work is never done. As soon as she was done with one thing, she was told to do something else. As a result, she had to work even harder just so that she could spare some time for her meditation practice.

Meditation lessons generally took place on the flat rooftop of the great house because it was breezy and cool there. Each day after a full day's work, Khun Yai would go up to the rooftop to practice meditation on her own. Initially, during meditation practice, her mind would dart from one thing to another ceaselessly, but with continuous and consistent effort her mind began to slow down its activity and eventually the activity ceased altogether. Khun Yai experienced airiness, spaciousness, lightness, and ease. Finally, she 'saw' a bright dot that looked like a star at her seventh base.



She allowed her mind to become more and more still as it went deeper and deeper into the center. One night on that rooftop, Khun Yai realized her wish and attained Phra Dhammakaya.

## Meeting Her Late Father

Once Khun Yai attained Phra Dhammakaya, she continued to practice meditation so that her mind would become more and more still until she experienced a tremendous brightness. Khun Yai recounted her experience to Khun Yai Tongsuk and added, *“I would really like to see my late father again. I have no idea where he is right now.”*

Khun Yai Tongsuk said to her, “Well, that’s not difficult at all.” Khun Yai Tongsuk then instructed our Khun Yai to go and see her late father by employing Vija Dhammakaya. As a result, Khun Yai went with Phra Dhammakaya to look for her father. Phra Dhammakaya led her to the Hell Realm. As soon as Phra Dhammakaya appeared, the fire in the Hell Realm was extinguished and all of the torturing there ceased temporarily. Khun Yai saw multitudes of hell beings undergoing the myriad forms of torture. Some hell beings had the body of a human being but the head of an animal. Some had the body of an animal but the head of a human being. Their bodies were dictated by their negative Kamma. So were the forms of their torture.

Khun Yai employed the Dhammakaya-Eye to look for her father. She found him and saw that he was very thin and totally exhausted. He had not a shred of clothing on him. His negative Kamma of habitual drinking dictated that he be force-fed molten copper until he died. Upon instant rebirth he had to undergo this horrific form of torture over and over again. Since his passing from the Human Realm, he had already undergone countless rebirths in the Hell Realm. At the sight of Phra Dhammakaya, Khun Yai’s father attempted to raise his hands in a Namaskar to pay homage to Phra Dhammakaya, but he was far too worn out to be able to do it. Khun Yai felt so terribly sorry for her father and wished that she could help him out of the Hell Realm. Finally, through Phra Dhammakaya, Khun Yai instructed her father to pledge the Five Precepts and to recall all the merit he had made while he was a human being.

Having pledged the Five Precepts, Phra Dhammakaya took Khun Yai’s father to the Celestial Realm. His form had changed from a scrawny, pale, and naked hell being to a Refined Human Body with a radiant complexion complete with clothing.

However, his celestial abode looked shabby when compared to the abodes of other celestial beings. As a human being, Khun Yai’s father had performed a mixture of good and bad deeds; that is, he made merit at the temple on occasions, but he also drank a bottle of alcohol daily. It was for this reason that his celestial abode was shabby. Moreover, when he did make merit, he did not do it to the best of his ability. Therefore, his abode was also quite small. Khun Yai Tongsuk instructed our Khun Yai to use the merit earned from attaining Phra Dhammakaya to improve her father’s celestial abode by making it better and bigger. At this point, his body had

changed to that of a male celestial being complete with celestial attire and jewelry. He also possessed a retinue of celestial attendants.

Afterward, Khun Yai taught her father to practice meditation and recite “*samma araham*”. She also told him that if he did not practice meditation daily he would return to the Hell Realm to be force-fed molten copper again and to face the same horrific fate for countless lifetimes until his negative Kamma had been spent.

On that occasion, Khun Yai had the opportunity to ask her father for forgiveness. Khun Yai’s father in the body of a male celestial being paid homage to Phra Dhammakaya with a Namaskar and said to Khun Yai, “I said what I did in anger and never meant for you to be deaf. But, if you’re still concerned, then let me make it clear to you that I forgive you everything.”

## Life at Wat Paknam

Khun Yai had practiced meditation until she could attain Phra Dhammakaya and rescue her father from the Hell Realm. Having finally fulfilled her wish, Khun Yai felt completely relieved and joyful. She had no desire for anything else in the world. Khun Yai said, “Attaining Phra Dhammakaya blesses me with supreme happiness. It’s the kind of happiness that cannot be found in the world. It’s the kind of happiness that is pure and peerless. It’s the kind of happiness that I’ve never experienced before in my life and I will never give it up even if someone were to offer me a pile of gold standing higher than myself.”

As a result, Khun Yai knew that she would have to work even harder so that she could ask Mrs. Liap for permission to go and practice meditation at Wat Paknam for an entire month. Therefore, our Khun Yai and Khun Yai Tongsuk came up with a plan and one day they went together to ask Mrs. Liap to allow Khun Yai to go to Wat Paknam for a month. Mrs. Liap readily gave her permission, but emphasized that Khun Yai had to return to work for her after the month was over. Khun Yai did not say anything and Mrs. Liap took her silence to mean that she agreed to return.

That night Khun Yai dreamt that she was standing on the bank of a large river and a boat came to take her across to the other side. She saw a huge and glorious Bodhi Tree that provided shade all around the area. In her dream, she disembarked and went to practice meditation in total bliss under the Bodhi Tree.

Khun Yai Tongsuk took our Khun Yai to Wat Paknam in the afternoon of a Thursday around B.E. 2481. At the time Luang Pu was teaching meditation practice in the hall that was located near the kitchen.<sup>2</sup> When Khun Yai Tongsuk introduced our Khun Yai to Luang Pu, Luang Pu looked at Khun Yai quietly for a moment and said to her, “You arrive too late.” Luang Pu sent Khun Yai to research Vija Dhammakaya in the Vija Dhammakaya Workshop that very day.

Normally, one had to go through a rigorous screening process before one could go to work in the Vija Dhammakaya Workshop. The candidate had first to be tested by expert practitioners of Vija Dhammakaya. He/she had to first answer the questions that only a person that had attained Phra Dhammakaya could answer. However, Khun Yai did not have to go through this process.

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<sup>2</sup> Luang Pu taught meditation practice to lay devotees every Thursday afternoon. Additional lessons given on other days were considered special occasions.

Not only was it difficult for one to enter the Vija Dhammakaya Workshop, but it was also difficult for one to adjust to the new environment and the new people. Being a new member, Khun Yai was given for her use old and broken things, such as, the bed, mosquito net, etc. Khun Yai washed and darned the old and smelly mosquito net. She cleaned and repaired the old, dirty, and damaged bed infested with bedbugs. Khun Yai refused to allow the situation to impact her negatively.

Initially, at night while she was sleeping the bedbugs would come out to bite her. Khun Yai patiently placed each bedbug in a tiny spittoon and covered it with a piece of paper nightly until all the bedbugs had been removed. The bedbugs that had been caught each night were released outdoors in the morning.

When Khun Yai first went to live at Wat Paknam, other female residents would not allow her to eat with them. The reason was that Khun Yai was very thin; she had long hair and deep-set eyes, which caused other women to fear that she might have a serious infectious disease. Even when the kitchen staff served her food, they would place it on a tin plate and shoved it rudely toward her.

Normally, a person so treated day in and day out would find it difficult to put up with the situation. However, Khun Yai's only concern was Vija Dhammakaya. She was wise enough to tell herself that she was eating Luang Pu's food and living under Luang Pu's patronage, hence, others' treatment of her could not impact her in any way.

Moreover, by nature Khun Yai had a clear and pure heart. She looked at everything on the bright side and refused to read anything negative into even the most unbearable situation. She reasoned that the women that shoved her food plate toward her had to get up very early and labor in front of the hot stoves for several hours daily. Naturally, they would be too tired to treat her kindly. She figured that she needed to eat so that she would have the strength to study Vija Dhammakaya and she was grateful for the food.

She also felt good to be eating by herself. This way she could come and go as she pleased. Moreover, she could practice meditation while she was eating and doing her dishes. Khun Yai would never allow anything to get in the way of her meditation practice.

## **Entering the Realm of Vija Dhammakaya**

Although Khun Yai was a new member of the Vija Dhammakaya Workshop, she was very conscientious and she spent every waking moment practicing meditation. She wanted to catch up with the older members of the team and diligently trained her mind to become more and more still. She wanted to be of the most use to Luang Pu. Through her conscientiousness and due diligence, Khun Yai's Vija Dhammakaya prowess had increased exponentially with time.

Some unusual questions that Luang Pu put to Khun Yai initially included:

“Chandra, I just walked past the Upasatha Hall and saw a bird come down to stand on its roof. The bird turned around to look behind it before looking ahead. Why did it do that?”

At the question, Khun Yai allowed her mind to become so still at the seventh base of her body that she experienced the sort of brightness that was equal to the sky full of countless suns. Images of the entire scenario appeared to her so she answered,

“Venerable sir, the bird turned around to look at the direction from which it came so that it could remember its way. It then looked ahead at the direction in which it would go to find food.”

Luang Pu said, “That’s the way to do it.”

Luang Pu’s questions became increasingly complex as the days went by. The next day, Luang Pu asked Khun Yai another question. “Chandra, I left the refectory and saw a man with a bad leg. Go and see if his astral body also has a bad leg.” Once again, Khun Yai gave Luang Pu a satisfactory answer.

Whenever Luang Pu asked anyone a question and the answer he received was a satisfactory one, Luang Pu would say, “That’s the way to do it.” However, Luang Pu would say nothing if the answer was incorrect.

Later still, Luang Pu would ask Khun Yai questions about the Indian people living in the Pahurat district of Bangkok as well as the people of other religious beliefs, things that Khun Yai had no prior knowledge of. Still Khun Yai was able to answer every one of Luang Pu’s questions correctly. Luang Pu would always ask Khun Yai, “When you go out to eat at the refectory, is your mind at the center?” Khun Yai’s love of Vijja Dhammakaya coupled with Luang Pu’s encouragement motivated Khun Yai to keep her mind constantly still at the center of her body. Her Vijja Dhammakaya prowess was such that eventually she came to occupy the ‘seat of abandonment’ at the Vijja Dhammakaya Workshop.

This ‘seat of abandonment’ looked like the seat used by a Buddhist monk when he is giving a Dhamma lecture. The ‘seat of abandonment’ was reserved for the practitioner whose Vijja Dhammakaya was truly outstanding. When Khun Yai practiced meditation at night, she had to cover the seat and herself with a small mosquito net. Since this was a small bench, Khun Yai had to sit still and upright at all times. Should she deviate from the upright position, she would be bitten by mosquitoes. This constant vigilance made Khun Yai’s meditation posture exceptionally graceful and dignified.

Now, the word '*abandonment*' here requires further explanation. Once the mind becomes so still that it leaves the coarse human body to be with the more and more refined Dhammakayas, the mind automatically abandons all sense acknowledgement of the physical world because it is residing in the realm of Dhammakayas. But, once the scheduled time of meditation is up, the mind will automatically resume the sense acknowledgement of the physical world. This highly profound and most advanced level of meditation practice makes the mind very pure and very potent. Such an elevated state of mind can penetrate the breadth and depth of enlightened Knowledge. The mind is said to possess penetrating insight. Khun Yai's consistent and earnest practice changed her from an illiterate person to an expert practitioner of Vijja Dhammakaya. Khun Yai was ranked among the forefront of Vijja Dhammakaya practitioners and she was trusted by Luang Pu to be the head of her meditation shift.

The days and nights had passed by too soon and the day came when Khun Yai had already been at Wat Paknam for a month. However, Khun Yai had no desire to return to work for Mrs. Liap because she wanted to continue learning Vijja Dhammakaya from Luang Pu. Khun Yai said to Khun Yai Tongsuk, "I am not going back." Khun Yai Tongsuk said, "Neither am I. Let's become a nun."

"How are we going to become a nun?" Khun Yai asked.

"Well, we can rent some nun's clothing for now." Khun Yai Tongsuk answered.

And with that the two women shaved their heads and donned the nun's clothing that very night. Luang Pu was pleased to see them both become a nun.

When Mrs. Liap came to Wat Paknam the next day, she saw the two nuns sitting in front of Luang Pu. She also noticed how Khun Yai's complexion simply glowed. At the time Mrs. Liap had to hold her tongue out of her deep respect for Luang Pu. But, once Luang Pu left, Mrs. Liap asked Khun Yai, "I thought you're coming back, but you're now a nun." Khun Yai did not say anything to her in return.

Apparently Khun Yai had made such a deep impression on Mrs. Liap that even after twenty years when she was 85 years old she still said to Khun Yai, "Chandra, Chandra, you said that you would come back, but you didn't." Even when Mrs. Liap was near the time of her passing, she sent someone to ask Khun Yai to come and see her so that she could earn merit by offering alms to Khun Yai. At the sight of Khun Yai, Mrs. Liap had the same sentence to say to her.

Personally, Khun Yai had never wanted to work as part of any household staff at all. Khun Yai willingly put herself at Mrs. Liap's disposal for the very purpose of gaining access to Wat Paknam and Vijja Dhammakaya.

## Practicing Vija Dhammakaya

The place where Vija Dhammakaya was practiced was called the “*Vija Dhammakaya Workshop*”. In those days, it was a large kuti made of wood. Additions had been made on both sides of the kuti in order to enlarge it even more. There was a permanent partition in the middle of the huge room to separate it into two parts. One side was for the monks and Luang Pu. The other side was for the female practitioners. At the time there were about 30 monks and 30 female practitioners most of whom were nuns and all of whom observed the Eight Precepts. A small opening was cut into the partition so that the women could see Luang Pu’s face when he gave them instructions.

The workshop initially started with shifts of four hours around the clock. However, during WWII, it was changed to shifts of six hours around the clock. Two groups of practitioners would take turn being on duty in shifts of six hours and two shifts a day. The first shift was on duty from 6 p.m. to midnight. The second shift was on duty from midnight to 6 a.m. The first shift was on duty again from 6 a.m. to noon and the second shift was on duty again from noon to 6 p.m. The work continued around the clock.

Luang Pu had chosen Khun Yai to head the night shift because Khun Yai was exceptionally conscientious and diligent in regards to Vija Dhammakaya. Her supernormal insight was extraordinarily precise and accurate. Moreover, Khun Yai was a highly responsible person. And last but not least, she possessed a strong constitution.

Khun Yai well deserved her appointment because she was earnest and diligent and did her work beyond the call of duty. When she practiced meditation, she did not move her body at all and she could abandon all sense acknowledgement until the six hours were up. Moreover, when the new shift came in and every member in her shift had already left, she still remained in her seat for an additional half an hour or an hour in order to hear what new instructions Luang Pu would give to the new shift so that she could continue the work outside the workshop.

Khun Yai would continue to research Vija Dhammakaya while she went about tending to her personal business. Her physical body moved about, but her mind stood completely still at the center of her body at all times. When it was time to enter the workshop, Khun Yai would always go in 15 minutes earlier in order to hear Luang Pu’s final words of advice to the members of the shift that were going off-duty. Khun Yai wanted to garner every bit of Luang Pu’s Vija Dhammakaya knowledge. As a result, when it came to researching Vija Dhammakaya, Khun Yai knew how to begin the work, how to end it, how to transfer it, etc.

It had been two years after Khun Yai began practicing Vija Dhammakaya when WW II broke out. At the time Khun Yai was the head of the second shift. Luang Pu had every one of his able pupils work to help save the nation and all of humanity by employing Vija Dhammakaya. At times, strategically important places were camouflaged as a forest or the sea. At other times,

the city was camouflaged as a forest and the forest appeared as a city in order to cause the bombs to fall by the wayside so that a great many lives could be spared.

Bangkok was bombed very often, since the Japanese army had seized it and made it its command center for mobilizing troops into Burma and India. Luang Pu was willing to give up his life protecting the country by remaining at Wat Paknam. Many people believed in Luang Pu's exceptional virtue and supernatural powers that they came to seek shelter from the bombs at Wat Paknam.

Luang Pu would usually check with his able pupils to see what time the planes were coming to drop the bombs. If the answer came from Khun Yai, everyone would get ready to turn off all the lights at the stated time because they knew how accurate Khun Yai's supernormal insight was. Luang Pu commanded all of the bomb dislocation work himself. And Khun Yai was instrumental in accomplishing this work.<sup>3</sup>

Practicing Vijja Dhammakaya for twelve hours a day for years would not have been possible if the practitioner did not possess a very robust constitution and a mind as tough as a diamond. For Khun Yai, the war meant nothing to her except for the fact that she had the opportunity to delve deeper and deeper into Vijja Dhammakaya. And that made her very happy. Khun Yai was not affected by the scarcity of food, clothing, and other necessities brought upon by the war and exacerbated by the terrible floods occurring simultaneously in many parts of the country.

Although Khun Yai was very thin, her constitution was very strong. Whenever Khun Yai practiced Vijja Dhammakaya, her mind would leave her coarse human body to unite as one with Phra Dhammakaya, the Knower within her. Khun Yai's body was, therefore, like a precious vessel that held countless Dhammakayas that constantly transmitted their supernatural powers to her. It was for this reason that Khun Yai possessed great supernatural powers.

After the war, Khun Yai continued to practice and research Vijja Dhammakaya. She had been able through Vijja Dhammakaya to learn the truth about the worlds and the galaxies, to learn about wholesome Dhatudhamma, unwholesome Dhatudhamma, and neutral Dhatudhamma, to learn about the war waged between the wholesome Dhatudhamma and the unwholesome Dhatudhamma, when it began, how it related to us, etc. The enlightened Knowledge, which can be attained through the still mind, is indeed peerless and rare.

Khun Yai was supremely happy to be learning Vijja Dhammakaya from Luang Pu. The reason is that Vijja Dhammakaya is the source of blissful happiness. Khun Yai paid no attention to anything else, since all that she concerned herself with was the Uttermost of Dhamma. Years later, when Khun Yai was still well and strong, she would sometimes tell some of the pupils close to her, ***"I will not go to Nibbana until I can completely eradicate Mara."***

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<sup>3</sup> The bomb dislocation work was well known to the people in those days and had been written up in books and newspapers. There were also eye-witnesses around Wat Paknam that saw the image of a nun floating in the air above the Sapanut Bridge.



Through Vijja Dhammakaya, Luang Pu discovered that the root cause of all human suffering was '*Phya Mara*'. Phya Mara are the hordes of beings that obstruct the performance of wholesome deeds.

There are several mentions of Phya Mara in the Tripitaka. Phya Mara are the hordes of beings that belong to unwholesome Dhatudhamma whereas all the living beings in this and the infinite number of galaxies belong to wholesome Dhatudhamma. The two opposing Dhatudhamma have been at war since the beginning of time. This war demonstrates itself as Dhamma vs. Adhamma, merit vs. demerit, good vs. bad, light vs. darkness, knowledge vs. ignorance, and purity vs. impurity. The war has been constantly waged in the battlegrounds, which include *Akasaloka (our environment)*, *Khandhaloka (our body)*, and *Sattavaloka (our mind)*.

Sattavaloka is made up of sight, memory, thought, and cognition. Sattavaloka encompasses the realm of the mind. Khandhaloka means the physical body and it includes the physical body of every living being within the Three Spheres of Existence. Therefore, Khandhaloka encompasses the realm of the physical body. Akasaloka means the environment which extends outward from the physical body into the atmosphere.

Luang Pu added that if the producer of all suffering or Phya Mara could not be eradicated, suffering would continue to plague all living beings. Luang Pu also taught that the wars waged among human beings were acts of wrongfulness and should have never happened. He said that if we really want to fight with the real enemy, we must wage war against the root cause of defilements which is Phya Mara. It is Phya Mara that cause us to think, say, and do unwholesome things and to incur retribution; the result of which is perpetual suffering in the round of rebirth. It is Phya Mara that make our body age, get sick and die. It is Phya Mara that cause our environment to turn against us such that we experience floods, drought, other natural disasters, etc. It is Phya Mara that cause human beings to wage war with each other, to commit atrocities, etc. Not until we can completely eradicate Phya Mara that we can be free from the dictate of greed, anger, and ignorance. It is only when Phya Mara can be completely eradicated that we can return to wholesomeness.

Luang Pu knew that for as long as we cannot attain the Uttermost of Dhamma<sup>4</sup>, we would still fall prey to Phya Mara. It was for this reason that Luang Pu had worked so hard all throughout his life employing Vijja Dhammakaya to gain ground on Phya Mara.

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<sup>4</sup> The Uttermost of Dhamma is the point and time when Phya Mara can be completely eradicated.

## Khun Yai Was Peerless

Whether in time of peace or during WWII, Khun Yai was one of the staunch warriors of the Dhamma Army that employed Vijja Dhammakaya to do battle with Phya Mara 24 hours a day. Khun Yai was so dedicated in her efforts that she came to possess rare and great supernatural powers. Khun Yai's sole purpose in life was to increase her Vijja Dhammakaya prowess so that she could fulfill her duty as one of Luang Pu's top pupils. Khun Yai valued her work more than her life and had always been a model pupil. Khun Yai's consistent and persistent dedication finally earned a compliment from Luang Pu who said on one occasion amidst all the other Dhamma warriors that "*Chandra is peerless.*"

Such words of compliment were reserved for Khun Yai only. No other pupils before or since had ever received these words of compliment from Luang Pu.

The rare compliment received from Luang Pu did not change Khun Yai in any way. And she continued to keep her mind absolutely still at the seventh base of her body. Khun Yai also practiced 'Santosa' in that she was content with whatever she had. Khun Yai did not like to accumulate things and enjoyed sharing what she had with others. This attribute of Khun Yai's can be shown in the following example.

On one occasion, a lay devotee offered a fan made of peacock feathers to Luang Pu. Luang Pu wanted to give the fan to his pupils so he asked them to draw lots for it. Khun Yai was the last one to draw and she had to ask another lady to read the lot for her. This lady read it out loud and everyone had a good laugh. She said, "Chandra Khonnokyoong won the peacock fan". The reason everyone was laughing was that the word 'khonnokyoong' meant peacock feathers and it was fitting that someone with such a last name should win the fan made of peacock feathers.

Khun Yai had the fan for only one day when Khun Yai Tongsuk asked for it because she wanted to make merit by offering it to a certain monk. Khun Yai gave the fan up easily like she did everything material.

For Khun Yai, the only thing that mattered to her was Vijja Dhammakaya. On one occasion, Luang Pu had been teaching Vijja Dhammakaya when all of a sudden, he asked Khun Yai, "Chandra, what makes snakeskin gourami (a type of fish) delicious?" The question stumped Khun Yai because generally she had her meals merely to sustain her body, she had never paid attention to how anything tasted.

## Perpetuating Vijja Dhammakaya

### Luang Pu's Command

Around the year B.E. 2497, five years before his passing, Luang Pu called a meeting of all his followers. He wanted to let everyone know that he would pass away in five years' time. He wanted everyone to help propagate Vijja Dhammakaya worldwide because Vijja Dhammakaya was extremely important and beneficial to all humankind. Luang Pu told Khun Yai to stay put at Wat Paknam to wait for the rightful heir of Vijja Dhammakaya.

Five years later, Luang Pu fell gravely ill and only monks were allowed to be near him. Khun Yai could not visit Luang Pu and could only wait to hear news of Luang Pu's condition. Rules and orders at Wat Paknam were such that nuns had to keep to themselves and far away from the monks. Finally, Luang Pu passed away on February 3, B.E. 2502 around 3 p.m.

After Luang Pu's passing, many of the practitioners of Vijja Dhammakaya went their separate ways. Some moved elsewhere. A few remained at Wat Paknam to teach Vijja Dhammakaya. Khun Yai remained at Wat Paknam to care for her first meditation teacher, Khun Yai Tongsuk. She had been staying with Khun Yai Tongsuk at the tiny three-storied house.<sup>5</sup>

Khun Yai had always lived with Khun Yai Tongsuk. They were like sisters and at times like teacher and pupil. Luang Pu had assigned Khun Yai Tongsuk to teach Vijja Dhammakaya nationwide and she had done a superb job of it. In those days, whenever Khun Yai Tongsuk had to be away for a while, she was afraid that her Vijja Dhammakaya would fall behind. Therefore, upon her return, she would ask our Khun Yai to give her a refresher course. Khun Yai Tongsuk had many followers and had been able to propagate Vijja Dhammakaya to people of every social class. When she returned home exhausted, our Khun Yai was the one that ministered to her.

Around the year B.E. 2503, Khun Yai Tongsuk began to suffer from uterine cancer. Whenever the disease flared up, she would go to receive treatments at Siriraj Hospital. When she was better, she would return home. She had gone in and out of the hospital many times until nothing further could be done for her.

In her final stage, Khun Yai Tongsuk would sometimes lash out at Khun Yai because the high fever made her delirious. Khun Yai took everything in stride. Khun Yai Tongsuk had experienced such excruciating pain that often times she would refuse to take any medication. Khun Yai had to exercise great care in ministering to Khun Yai Tongsuk. Khun Yai took care of Khun Yai Tongsuk day and night knowing full well that her condition was terminal.

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<sup>5</sup> The lowest floor had only sitting room, Khun Yai lived on the second floor, and the third floor was only one meter high.

The final stage of uterine cancer was horrific. It gave off a very strong and highly repulsive odor such that very few people came to visit Khun Yai Tongsuk anymore. And Khun Yai ended up being the only person to take care of Khun Yai Tongsuk's every need.

Khun Yai never felt repulsed by Khun Yai Tongsuk's condition. She struggled to keep Khun Yai Tongsuk's body clean. She washed her clothes and doused them with Thai perfume so that when Khun Yai Tongsuk's followers did come to visit, the malodor would not be too overpowering for them.

One day Khun Yai Tongsuk came out of the bathroom and said calmly to Khun Yai, ***“My guts have been eaten through.”*** Khun Yai Tongsuk smiled and added, ***“At my time of death, there will be just you and me.”***

On Khun Yai Tongsuk's final day, the two Khun Yais were alone together. Khun Yai Tongsuk was lying down with her head on Khun Yai's lap. She opened her eyes and said her last words, ***“I'm leaving now. I see Phra Dhammakayas everywhere.”*** Khun Yai said to her, ***“Aim straight for Nibbana.”*** And at that Khun Yai Tongsuk passed away quietly.

To our Khun Yai, Khun Yai Tongsuk was her beloved and revered teacher who gave birth to her Dhamma life because she was the one who taught her to attain Phra Dhammakaya and helped her to have the opportunity to study Vijja Dhammakaya. Therefore, Khun Yai did her very best to repay Khun Yai Tongsuk by arranging for her a very fitting funeral.

Khun Yai went around to Khun Yai Tongsuk's followers to let them know about the funeral. At the time the Venerable Phramahaprayoon, whose ordination had been sponsored by Khun Yai Tongsuk, and other followers had come to lend a hand. Khun Yai rented everything she needed for the funeral and bought a large number of bouquets and arrangements of fresh flowers to dress the hall in which the coffin was laid. This hall was located at the front of Wat Paknam. Religious ceremonies were held here in this hall whereas the cremation was held at Wat Appasornsawan. Khun Yai's Tongsuk's ashes were later scattered in the river.

After Khun Yai Tongsuk's funeral was over, Khun Yai had the chance to reflect on Luang Pu's command about propagating Vijja Dhammakaya worldwide. She made the decision to remain at Wat Paknam in order to teach Vijja Dhammakaya and wait for the rightful heir of Vijja Dhammakaya to show up at Wat Paknam.

## Meeting the Heir of Vija Dhammakaya, the Future Luang Por Dhammajayo

Eventually, a young man came to see Khun Yai at Wat Paknam and expressed his wish to study meditation. His meditation progressed so well and so fast that Khun Yai was confident that he was the rightful heir of Vija Dhammakaya. This young man was none other than the future Luang Por Dhammajayo<sup>6</sup>.

As a student of Suankularb College, Luang Por was already very different from the young men of his age. He frequently found himself pondering the questions: *Why are we born? What is the purpose of our life?*

Luang Por had been pondering these questions since he was just thirteen years old. He had tried to search for answers from knowledgeable people and from the very many books that he read. In fact, under his bed, there were always stacks of books. He had gone to different temples to study meditation as well as searching for the answers to his questions, but he had not yet been able to find satisfactory answers.

One day, Luang Por happened upon a book entitled, “*Vipassana Bunternsarn*”. In it there was a story about our Khun Yai, Khun Yai Tongsuk, and another teaching nun called ‘Yanee’. Their pictures also appeared in the book. There was an article about how Khun Yai dislocated bombs during WWII. This story appealed to Luang Por enormously, for he figured if Khun Yai could dislocate bombs, she would certainly be able to answer the questions that he had had since he was thirteen years old.

Luang Por was determined to look up Khun Yai at Wat Paknam. Strangely enough, although Luang Por was at the time staying near Wat Maisrisupan, which was near Plu Market it was not until three years later that Luang Por had the opportunity to go to Wat Paknam.

At the time Luang Por was 18 years old going on 19. After Luang Por took his entrance exam to university, he had some free time and decided to go to Wat Paknam. He did not know anyone there and was walking around a particular building when he saw Khun Yai sitting with her back toward him at Khun Yai Tongsuk’s funeral. Not recognizing Khun Yai, Luang Por had to leave the temple without meeting her on that day.

School was open and Luang Por went to study at Kasetsart University. He did not have the opportunity to look up Khun Yai again until during the school recess in October, B.E. 2506. And when he did, Luang Por walked around the temple asking people for Khun Yai. Since Luang Por did not use Khun Yai’s familiar title and name, no one knew who he was talking about.

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<sup>6</sup> Luang Por Dhammajayo’s given name is Chaiyaboon Sudtipon. He is currently the Abbot of Wat Phra Dhammakaya holding the monastic title of Phrarajbhavanavisudh.

Luang Por did meet an elderly monk who suggested that he studied meditation practice with the teaching monk, the Venerable Veera Ganuttamo (currently holding the monastic title of Phrabhavanakosalathera). At the time the venerable monk was teaching meditation practice through a loudspeaker and he was talking about how Luang Pu employed Vija Dhammakaya to help alleviate human suffering, resolve the problem of scarcity after the war, make the rain to fall seasonally, heal diseases, wage war with Phya Mara, etc. Although the contents were far too complicated for Luang Por who was there for the first time, he listened to the lecture and returned every day after that for two whole weeks.

Luang Por was still determined to find Khun Yai. One day, after meditation, Luang Por turned toward the young man that was sitting next to him and looked about his age and asked him if he knew Khun Yai using the unfamiliar name and title. Once again, the answer was no, but he did say that there was another nun by a similar name. However, this time Luang Por decided to go and check to see whether they were one and the same.

This time Luang Por saw Khun Yai in front of the building where Luang Pu's body was enshrined. She was heading somewhere to tend to some business. To Luang Por, Khun Yai looked very thin, very ordinary except for her eyes, which were filled with love and kindness as well as strength of character. Something extraordinary about Khun Yai's eyes made Luang Por believe that she was the teacher he had been looking for and that she was the one who would be able to answer his questions.

However, when Luang Por finally had the chance to speak to Khun Yai, he asked her about the dislocation of bombs instead. Khun Yai was in a hurry and said to Luang Por, "I have a pressing business to tend to and a funeral to attend. I'll see you some other time." Luang Por was thrilled with Khun Yai's answer and went the next day to see her.

Khun Yai was at the time living in the tiny three-storied house which had belonged to Khun Yai Tongsuk. Looking from the outside, it looked more like a one-storied house. The ground floor was lined with wood panels for people to sit and practice meditation. There was only sitting room in the ground floor.

The second floor was the largest part of the house. On one side of the room, there were an altar, a storage cabinet, and a smaller altar on which were placed Khun Yai Tongsuk's pictures. On the other side was Khun Yai's living area. It was where she slept, practiced meditation, taught meditation practice, conducted the food-offering ceremony, and received visitors. There was a medicine cabinet there as well. Near the middle of the room, there was a small post that reached nowhere. It was the post on which Luang Por leaned during meditation practice. The third floor was only a meter or so high. The floor of the third floor is the ceiling of the kitchen which was on the ground floor. It meant that the kitchen on the ground floor had a high ceiling.

When Luang Por went to see Khun Yai for the first time at this house, Khun Yai said something to Luang Por, which puzzled him at the time. Khun Yai said, *“You are the person that Luang Pu told me to fetch during WW II.”*<sup>7</sup> It so happened that Luang Por was born during WW II.

The first time that Luang Por went to practice meditation with Khun Yai, she told him to close his eyes and said simply, “Do a lot of sitting. Continue to sit still.” During this time period, Luang Por obeyed Khun Yai in everything, for he felt no need for questions, explanations or anything at all.

Initially, Khun Yai did not have her own pupils. Those that came to study meditation with her had been Khun Yai Tongsuk’s pupils. Therefore, it can be said that Luang Por was Khun Yai’s first pupil. Luang Por was also the first person to call her, *‘Khun Yai’*. And she seemed pleased with the title.

Luang Por went to practice meditation with Khun Yai every day. Whenever Khun Yai received visitors, Luang Por would go to walk around the cloister to look at and count the number of Buddha Images there and to see who had donated money toward each of the images. He then went to count the number of tiny boxes that had been built into the wall for the purpose of storing a deceased person’s ashes. He would read the words engraved at the front of each box, which gave details of the deceased person’s age. Some were older and some were still children. This activity made Luang Por realize that however rich or poor, everyone had to die. Once Khun Yai’s visitors had left, Luang Por would go back to practice meditation with Khun Yai.

## **Khun Yai’s Supernatural Powers**

When Luang Por first went to practice meditation with Khun Yai, she would encourage him to practice it with due diligence and in the correct manner. In terms of diligence, Khun Yai meant that Luang Por had to practice meditation consistently and everyday even though he might at times fall asleep during meditation. In terms of the correct manner, Khun Yai meant that Luang Por needed to observe whether he had followed Khun Yai’s instruction correctly. Due diligence and the correct manner is the formula for success in attaining Phra Dhammakaya.

Khun Yai’s daily routine consisted of teaching meditation practice and helping the people that came to see her about their trouble. Khun Yai treated every visitor in the same manner and helped everyone with love and kindness. Khun Yai helped even those that came to test her Dhamma knowledge or those that behaved toward her in an inappropriate manner.

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<sup>7</sup> What Khun Yai meant was that Luang Pu told her to go to the Celestial Realm and ask Luang Por to be reborn in the Human Realm during WW II.

Visiting the Hell Realm and the Celestial Realm was to Khun Yai as easy as walking from her house to the front of the temple or to the refectory. Whenever anyone came to ask her about his departed loved ones, all Khun Yai had to do was close her eyes, her mind would become absolutely still and at one with Phra Dhammakaya. Through the Dhammakaya-Eye, Khun Yai could already gain access to the Three Spheres of Existence and could see whatever she wished to see as easily as looking at a gooseberry in her hand. She would report what she saw directly and honestly. She might, for example, say, “Your departed relative is now in the Hell Realm.... Your loved one’s name was such and such and during his life as a human being, he had committed such and such misdeeds. He had undergone such and such forms of torture.... I’ve found your departed loved one and she wanted me to give you this message.... I’ve brought the merit you have made on his behalf to him and he is now out of the Hell Realm and reborn in another realm with such and such living conditions. I’ve taught him to practice meditation and I’ve told him that if he neglects to do it he would go right back to the Hell Realm. You must make merit on his behalf regularly and you must also practice meditation.... Some people were surprised how their departed loved ones could end up in the Hell Realm when in so far as they could tell they were perfectly decent when they were still living. It was not until they had gone back home to investigate further that they found out how earlier in their loved ones’ lives, they had transgressed the Precepts and had committed all the misdeeds mentioned by Khun Yai.

One person came to see Khun Yai about having a surgery. Khun Yai closed her eyes for about five minutes. Afterward, she said to the person, “Why are you having surgery when there is nothing wrong with you?” The person said that her surgeon had already scheduled surgery for her, so Khun Yai said to her, “That’s up to you, but be sure to chant ‘samma araham’ as you prepare yourself for surgery.” After all was said and done, the person came back to report to Khun Yai that Khun Yai was right. All Khun Yai said was, “That’s good. Now, you know what it is like to have surgery.”

In one case, it was the first time that this particular couple came to see Khun Yai. After they paid homage to Khun Yai, Khun Yai said to the man, “You should stop betting on horses.” The man was sure his wife had informed Khun Yai about this beforehand, but his wife insisted that she had only just met Khun Yai. Khun Yai said everything calmly and nonchalantly, yet everything Khun Yai said was true.

There was a story about another couple. The wife was a follower of Khun Yai and had been a teacher at a public school. However, the husband did not believe in life in the hereafter. Still, just to be on the safe side, he did chant for an hour or two every day.

On one occasion, the couple came to see Khun Yai together. The husband wanted to ask Khun Yai about an incident that occurred to him one night. On that night, he was sleeping outside on the patio of his home in the countryside. It was a starlit night and he could see everything that happened very clearly. He saw smoke rising from the cracks of the patio floor



which had been made of planks of wood. The smoke rose into a human form as tall as the palm tree. It lifted its foot and stepped over the roof of the house.

This man had gone to different temples to try to find out what it was that he saw that night. He could not get a definitive answer and some even said that his eyesight had played a trick on him that night. When he asked Khun Yai what it was that he saw. Khun Yai said to him calmly, “What you saw was a Peta and this Peta was a relative of yours.”

The man said, “None of my relatives would ever be reborn a Peta.” Khun Yai said nothing in return and he asked, “Why was he reborn a Peta?”

Khun Yai said, “He was a lay person working at a temple, but he took from the temple.”

The man argued, “That can’t be. None of my relatives ever worked at a temple. But if you say he did, what was his name then?”

Khun Yai was still her calm and composed self as she answered, “His name was Russamee.”

Now, the man was incredulous, “I’m sure none of my relatives has such a name.” And he left.

Months later he returned to tell Khun Yai that indeed he had a relative by the name of Russamee. He used to work at a temple and did take from the temple. Still, he insisted that he did not believe in the existence of Petas.

When Luang Pu was still living, he trained his Vija Dhammakaya pupils to visit the Hell Realm and the Celestial Realm in order to give him answers to his questions. To give Luang Pu an accurate answer, one needed to have precise and accurate supernormal insight, which could come only through due diligence and devotion. Whoever gave Luang Pu the wrong answer would be called, *‘Keetai’* by Luang Pu.

The term *‘Keetai’* refers to the type of old-fashioned fire starter, which when lit produces ash which must be cleared away constantly otherwise the fire will go out. Therefore, ‘Keetai’ in Luang Pu’s meaning was a pupil that allowed his mind to wander off and roam freely when he was not being prodded by the teacher. However, such conduct could not apply to Khun Yai and she had never been called by such a name by Luang Pu. Khun Yai knew to learn from other people’s mistakes and would never want to make the same mistakes herself. In terms of Vija Dhammakaya, Khun Yai was always most diligent and most conscientious. She was Luang Pu’s model pupil.

Generally, Khun Yai possessed a strong constitution. She was always radiant and energetic. Soon after Khun Yai Tongasuk’s passing; however, Khun Yai fell very ill. One of her followers took her to see her family physician and another follower brought Khun Yai to her home on Sukhumvit Road, so she could minister to her.

Wherever Khun Yai was staying, Luang Por would go to see Khun Yai. This house on Sukhumvit Road could not be accessed by car and Luang Por had to walk for several kilometers each time he went to see Khun Yai. However, nothing could deter Luang Por from going to further his study of Vijja Dhammakaya with Khun Yai. In his mind at the time, there were only Khun Yai and Vijja Dhammakaya.

By the time Luang Por reached the house, he would be soaked with perspiration. When he went inside the house, he could see Khun Yai lying on a bed with the cover pulled over her head. Luang Por would go directly to Khun Yai's bed, sat on the floor to pay homage to Khun Yai and asked her how to proceed with his study. Khun Yai was not concerned about her illness but tried her best to further Luang Por's knowledge of Vijja Dhammakaya. Here the teacher was lying on her bed with the cover pulled over her head while her pupil sat on the floor soaked with perspiration. Yet, in both hearts, there was only happiness and joy.

Luang Por studied Vijja Dhammakaya with Khun Yai until she regained her health and returned to live at Wat Paknam. Luang Por went to study with Khun Yai at Wat Paknam every day. By then, Luang Por had developed such a deep respect for Khun Yai as only a pupil could his master. He was so eager to learn Vijja Dhammakaya that he was determined to increase his knowledge every day. Vijja Dhammakaya had given Luang Por the kind of happiness that he never knew existed. Luang Por could fathom Khun Yai's extraordinary virtue and Dhamma knowledge and knew Khun Yai's heart to be very clear and very pure. It was Khun Yai's normal practice to keep her mind absolutely still at the seventh base of her body. Khun Yai had no cares in the world. All she wanted to do was to increase her Vijja Dhammakaya prowess so that she could follow Luang Pu across however many lifetimes it would take to reach the Uttermost of Dhamma.

### **Luang Por Holds Khun Yai in High Regards**

In all the time that Luang Por studied Vijja Dhammakaya with Khun Yai, he could not help but develop the deepest respect for Khun Yai. As a result, he has made Khun Yai's exceptional virtue and ideal his own. The more Luang Por studied Vijja Dhammakaya, the happier he felt. Nothing could upset or annoy him even when some people were unpleasant toward him for reasons of their own. Luang Por had only goodwill toward everyone.

Luang Por could not harbor any unwholesome thought because his heart was too full of peace and happiness, which came from his diligent meditation practice. The change that Luang Por experienced within him made him more and more certain of the true value of meditation practice.

Luang Por realized that the Dhamma knowledge gained from practicing Vija Dhammakaya was completely different from secular knowledge. For one thing, no amount of secular knowledge could help a person escape from the pain and suffering inherent in every human life. Secondly, Dhamma knowledge provided Luang Por with clear and concise answers to many of his questions. He had finally understood the reason for his life here on earth as well as his true life objective. Thirdly, Dhamma knowledge can alleviate human suffering and lead one to Nibbana. For these reasons, Luang Por wanted to enter the monkhood. He asked Khun Yai for permission to ordain as a monk. Khun Yai told Luang Por that he needed to graduate from university first. Khun Yai wanted Luang Por to be a scholar in the secular world and a sage in the Dhamma world, for only then could he be of true use to Buddhism.

Soon afterward, Khun Yai taught Luang Por how to conduct the Food-Offering Ceremony by employing Vija Dhammakaya. During this time, Luang Por would be up early in the morning in order to go to the market to pick up certain foods with which to practice the food-offering ceremony. He was so happy that Khun Yai was willing to teach him everything she knew.

Employing Vija Dhammakaya to conduct the Food-Offering Ceremony is the source of incomparable merit. This meritorious practice was discovered and started by Khun Yai Tongskuk and our Khun Yai. The ceremony has since been conducted every month for decades and up until the present time.

This special method of making a food-offering to the Lord Buddhas involves arranging beautifully the offering, which includes fresh flowers, incense sticks, candles, fresh fruits, savory and sweet dishes. Vija Dhammakaya was then employed by those who are experts in it to refine the offered items until they have the pure elemental make-up of that of Phra Dhammakayas in Nibbana. Vija Dhammakaya is subsequently employed to increase the offering to match the number of the Lord Buddhas' Dhammakayas in Nibbana so that each set of offering could be delivered to the Dhammakaya of each Lord Buddha. Now, it must be explained here that the Lord Buddha's Dhammakaya has no need for such sustenance since He is eternally self-sustaining given His pure and perfect state. Experts of Vija Dhammakaya conduct this very important ceremony in order to earn incomparable merit. These experts of Vija Dhammakaya must be able to attain Nibbana with their Dhammakaya and 'see' with their Dhammakaya-Eye the countless Dhammakayas of the countless Lord Buddhas there. They can also 'see' the stream of merit, which flows directly from Nibbana into the center of their body as a result of the food-offering.

By the time Luang Por was 20 years old and the youngest of Khun Yai's followers, his Vija Dhammakaya prowess was already the most outstanding. For this reason, Khun Yai assigned Luang Por the duty of leading the Food-Offering Ceremony on the first Sunday of every month. Luang Por was also leading other important religious ceremonies, such as, the offering of the forest-robe, the offering of the rains-cloth, etc. Khun Yai would practice Vija Dhammakaya alongside Luang Por in every ceremony. Luang Por's leadership role was well-accepted by the older followers of Khun Yai.

During that period of Luang Por's life, he was filled with happiness and joy all day and all night long because in his mind there were only Khun Yai and Vijja Dhammakaya. Luang Por told us that Khun Yai was like his parents, his grandparents, his teacher, and his virtuous friend rolled into one. Luang Por was a devoted student and he was always contemplating Khun Yai's sage advice.

Luang Por had the highest regards for Khun Yai and strictly followed her instruction. On one New Year's Day, Kasetsart University put on a big party and Luang Por asked Khun Yai for permission to attend the party. Khun Yai did not tell him not to go, but she said, "You've attended the party every year already. This year you can also attend, but go there after midnight."

On that day, Luang Por practiced meditation and had a Dhamma conversation with Khun Yai until 8 p.m. before he took his leave to return to his dormitory on campus. By the time he had something to eat and went past the party it was already 10 p.m. In strictly following Khun Yai's instruction, he waited in the cattle corral until it was midnight. By the time midnight came and he left the cattle corral to go to the party, it was already over.

Luang Por's regards for Khun Yai's words was one of the reasons that made the Dhammakaya Community what it is today. Luang Por said that once we come to study under a chosen master, there is nothing more important than to pay close attention to his words and strictly follow them because we have already entrusted our life, our mind, and our path toward Nibbana to him. Moreover, in meditation practice, the slightest conflict can cause the meditator's mind to wander; hence, impossible to keep still.

Luang Por's righteous conduct caused Khun Yai to treat him with love and kindness. Moreover, she happily taught him everything she knew. Not everyone could succeed in learning Vijja Dhammakaya, left alone learning everything that Khun Yai knew. Luang Por was a very special case because he was very attentive and his meditation practice advanced very fast and very far within a short period of time.

## **Gathering Team Members**

Since B.E. 2507, Khun Yai and Luang Por had employed Vijja Dhammakaya to track down every individual that has pursued Perfections alongside them throughout the previous existences so that they could return to the fold to resume their work in this existence. And it was in B.E. 2509 that Luang Por brought Mr. Padej Pongsawad to meet Khun Yai.

Mr. Padej or the future Luang Por Dattajeevo is currently holding the monastic title of Phrabhavanaviriyakhun. He is also the Vice-Abbot of Wat Phra Dhammakaya. This is what Luang Por Dhammajayo had to say about Mr. Padej in those days, "He liked to wear bright-colored, striped shirts and blue jeans. He was hard and cool. His voice was so powerful that it could stop running cattle on its track. He was as handsome as Samson." Luang Por dubbed him 'Thoroughbred never gets fat'.

Luang Por Dattajeevo was a senior at Kasetsart University at the time when Luang Por Dhammajayo was a freshman. At that time, Luang Por Dattajeevo had just returned from an internship in Australia. They met for the first time on November 27, B.E. 2509, the day of the Loy Kratong Festival, which was held at Kasetsart University once every four years. At their first meeting, Luang Por Dattajeevo felt a special kinship toward Luang Por Dhammajayo and invited Luang Por Dhammajayo to drink with him. However, Luang Por turned down the invitation by saying that he did not drink because he observed the Precepts. Somehow, the phrase ‘observing the Precepts’ struck a chord in Luang Por Dattajeevo’s heart and as a result, it caused him to undergo a major lifestyle change.

Luang Por Dattajeevo was at one point learnt in the art of black magic in the areas of tough skin, chain tricks, walking on fire, transforming elements, etc. But, he was also interested in matters concerning the Hell Realm and the Celestial Realm. Therefore, he expressed to Luang Por Dhammajayo his wish to meet Khun Yai. However, Luang Por Dhammajayo needed a period of three months to prepare Luang Por Dattajeevo in terms of proper conduct and manners before he could bring Luang Por Dattajeevo to meet Khun Yai.

Luang Por Dhammajayo needed to personally coach Luang Por Dattajeevo by telling him things like, “Khun Yai would not like that kind of talk.” “Khun Yai would not like to see you sit that way.” “Khun Yai would not like that expression in your eyes.” “Khun Yai would not like the way you’re ready to do battle with people.” So on and so forth. At the same time, Luang Por Dhammajayo also told Luang Por Dattajeevo what Khun Yai liked to see in a person.

Despite thorough coaching, Luang Por Dattajeevo still failed his first test. The first time that Luang Por brought Luang Por Dattajeevo to meet Khun Yai, out of the blue Luang Por Dattajeevo said to Khun Yai, “Yai, I’d like to use black magic to put mercury inside your hand.” Luang Por Dhammajayo signaled to Luang Por Dattajeevo and whispered to him that he should not have said such a thing. Khun Yai was a good sport however and told Luang Por Dattajeevo to do it to Luang Por Dhammajayo first.

Having forgotten everything that Luang Por Dhammajayo told him before coming to meet Khun Yai, Luang Por Dattajeevo said to Khun Yai, “Yai, Khun Chaiyaboon said that you took him to visit the Hell Realm and the Celestial Realm. Is that true?” Khun Yai answered calmly, “Yes, it is. I’ve once gone to help my father out of the Hell Realm.” Then came another question, “Can someone like me visit these places too?” Khun Yai answered, “You possess a great deal of merit. That’s why you’re sitting here right now. It won’t take long for you to learn it.”

Khun Yai’s words delighted Luang Por Dattajeevo to no end because he realized at that point that Khun Yai had just accepted him as her pupil. On that very first day, Luang Por Dattajeevo practiced meditation continuously for three whole hours. He wanted to demonstrate his earnestness to Khun Yai. However, Luang Por Dattajeevo’s mannerism offended many of Khun Yai’s older pupils. Some of them thought him uncouth, dirty, and loud. They begged Khun Yai not to take him on as a pupil, but to chase him out of her house instead. Luang Por

Dattajeevo only learnt about this years later. His only remark was, “Poor Khun Yai, she did have to be exceptionally patient with me.”

## **The Birth of Dhammaprasit House**

In that period, more and more people came to practice meditation with Khun Yai especially on the first Sunday of the month when the house would be packed, inside and out. This was also the same time that the new refectory was being built at Wat Paknam, which meant that it was only a matter of time before Khun Yai’s house would be torn down.

For these reasons, Khun Yai’s followers knew that a new house needed to be built for her. Both Luang Por Dhammajayo and Luang Por Dattajeevo convinced Khun Yai that a new house needed to be built and that the two of them would raise the necessary funds for the purpose.

Khun Yai told her followers that whoever contributed a nail, a plank of wood, a brick, etc., to the new house, which would serve as the new meditation center, would earn enormous merit. The merit earned would help one to attain Phra Dhammakaya easily in future existences. Luang Por Dhammajayo wanted to earn merit so he saved his lunch money for an entire month in order to donate it to the new meditation center. All in all, Khun Yai’s followers were able to raise altogether 58,000 bahts, which was a lot of money in those days. Everyone could not help but feel very proud of their collective accomplishment.

The new house inside Wat Paknam had two stories and was located in the northern part of the temple. The construction was approved by the Abbot of Wat Paknam<sup>8</sup> and the abbot had the Venerable Phrarajmoli (Narong Thitano), the former Vice Abbot of Wat Paknam and the former Abbot of Wat Rajorasaram as well as the Venerable Phrabhavanakosalathera (Teera Dhammadharo or Luang Por Lek) to help supervise the construction of the new meditation center. The latter was the headmaster of Vipassana School at Wat Paknam and he had kindly named the center, *‘Dhammaprasit House’*. It had a hidden meaning in that *Khun Yai would teach meditation practice to whoever arrived at this house.*

The construction of ‘Dhammaprasit House’ was completed near the end of B.E. 2510. It was the most modern house in the area and most definitely the cleanest. Khun Yai scrubbed and cleaned the wood floor until it shined.

Khun Yai was an exceptionally diligent person. She did all the work around the house herself. She loved for everything to be clean and neat. One day, Luang Por Dhammajayo saw Khun Yai eyeing something between the top of the stairs and the floor of the second floor. He asked Khun Yai what she was doing. Khun Yai said that she was looking to see if there was any dust there. Khun Yai was so unlike other people in that she cleaned not only the stairs but

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<sup>8</sup> He is currently holding the monastic title of Somdej Pramaharajamangalajarn .

their underside as well. Luang Por Dhammajayo asked her why she had to clean the stairs that way. Khun Yai said that when we clean everything well, it makes our mind clean as well. And a clean mind can enter the center of the body quickly.

Khun Yai's love of cleanliness was evident in her surroundings. Everything in her house was clean and neatly arranged. Khun Yai's things were simple and some pieces had been taken from the trash pile, but Khun Yai cleaned them and repaired them so that they could be used again.

Many of Khun Yai's followers brought her fruit and other things in paper bags. Khun Yai would cut these paper bags into square pieces to be used to cover the bottom of her spittoon. And a piece of paper would be added to the spittoon every time she expectorated. This way when the spittoon was full, her attendant could easily empty it and clean it.

Khun Yai's meditation seat and the place where she received visitors were one and the same. This was also the same place where she slept at night. Contents in her medicine cabinet were neatly arranged from small to large and low to high so that each bottle could be easily identified and readily removed for use. This cabinet had no door and yet each bottle or each container had not the slightest bit of dust on it.

Khun Yai's clothing was simple and clean. On one occasion, Luang Por Dattajeevo said to Khun Yai, *"Yai, your blouse has been patched over in several places, but how come it still looks so white. In fact, it looks whiter than my fairly new white shirt, which is made of a better quality material."*

Khun Yai looked at Luang Por Dattajeevo and said, *"You know, being a farmer's daughter I didn't own too many clothes. Therefore, I had to wash my clothes daily and I never kept dirty laundry overnight. Whatever I wore during the day would get washed late that afternoon. This way, dirt and stain did not get to hang around long on the clothes. As soon as they got washed, I would hang them out to dry in the sun. As soon as they were dry, I would remove them from the clothesline to preserve their colors. These are the reasons that my white clothes, however old they may be, remain almost as white as new."*

Luang Por Dattajeevo told us that he had never met anyone that loved cleanliness as much as Khun Yai. He said that Khun Yai had the cleanest rags as well. Having seen Khun Yai's example in this matter, Luang Por Dattajeevo made it a point to improve his own practice of cleanliness.

At Dhammaprasit House, Khun Yai taught meditation daily from morning until 8 p.m. Khun Yai's students were of every age and gender from school children to university students to working adults. Generally, most of the people came to the center around 6 p.m. or so.

One day in the middle of the year B.E. 2510, Luang Por Dattajeevo was practicing meditation with Khun Yai when he was suddenly overwhelmed by the power of black magic. He felt so suffocated and nauseous that he started to foam at the mouth. Khun Yai said to him, ***“You’d studied a great deal of black magic and the teachers of these arts are not allowing you to change direction. They’re here to obstruct your meditative effort.”*** Luang Por Dattajeevo grew very concerned for his welfare, but Khun Yai said to him, ***“You must be willing to lay down your life in order to attain Phra Dhammakaya. Every Lord Buddha has had to do it. The question is, are you brave enough to do it?”*** At Khun Yai’s question, courage and determination showed in Luang Por Dattajeevo’s eyes and he answered, ***“Yes, I am.”***

Luang Por Dattajeevo continued to practice meditation while Khun Yai employed Vija Dhammakaya to prevent him from being bullied by black magic. Luang Por’s condition improved, but somehow the symptoms refused to disappear completely. Khun Yai understood the reason behind it and said to Luang Por, “This is all I can do for you. The rest you will have to do yourself. There’s a part of you that is still cherishing Mara’s knowledge and that’s why your symptoms refuse to disappear altogether. You won’t be able to perform the black art anymore, at any rate. And your knowledge at this point is impure. Therefore, you must endeavor to practice meditation earnestly from now on.”

Soon after Luang Por Dattajeevo came to practice meditation regularly at Dhammaprasit House, he invited university students that were members of the Buddhist Society to come and learn meditation from Khun Yai. They came and help with the Food-Offering Ceremony on the first Sunday of every month. Since Luang Por Dattajeevo was at the time 29 years old and was older than the rest of the university students, he was not assigned any particular duty. He took it upon himself to arrange all the participants’ shoes that had been left in disarray at the foot of the stairs so that every pair of shoes was lined up nicely and in neat rows. Everybody was later pleasantly surprised, but they did not know who was responsible for arranging them. Luang Por Dattajeevo did not make his effort known, but was very pleased at both the result and the reaction to it.

Later still, Khun Yai assigned Luang Por Dattajeevo to help teach meditation practice and receive visitors. Luang Por Dhammajayo told us that Khun Yai gave these duties to Luang Por Dattajeevo because he worked well with everyone and knew how to tackle a project from start to finish. Most importantly, he understood gratitude; he was honest and had the ability to teach others.

At Dhammaprasit House one evening, Khun Yai led her students to practice meditation. After about ten minutes, Khun Yai disappeared into the bathroom and was there for quite a while before she returned to her meditation. After the meditation session was over, Luang Por Dattajeevo went down to use the bathroom and noticed that the bathroom walls and floor were completely clean and dry. He also noticed that whenever he went in to use the bathroom, it would always be nice and clean regardless of the fact that it had been used by someone else before him.



Being an observant person, Luang Por wanted to know what Khun Yai was doing while everyone was sitting in meditation. When he opened his eyes and found Khun Yai missing, he would get up to see where Khun Yai had gone to only to find that she was cleaning the bathroom. The image made a deep impact on Luang Por Dattajeevo. Every student used the bathroom and left it very wet. No one knew that it was Khun Yai that cleaned up after every one.

When Luang Por Dattajeevo had the opportunity, he asked Khun Yai why she had to do it. Khun Yai said, “I am old now and will be sixty soon. It’s easy for an old person to slip and fall, but it’s difficult to recover from the fall. Therefore, I have to make sure that the bathroom floor is always clean and dry.”

Needless to say, although Luang Por Dattajeevo had only known Khun Yai for just a short while, but already Khun Yai’s exceptional virtue and conduct had made a deep impression on him.

## **Encouraging Her Followers to Practice Chastity**

Some time later, there was a group of young men and women that came regularly to learn meditation from Khun Yai. It was then that Khun Yai began the campaign to encourage her followers to practice chastity. Generally, after the meditation session was over, conversations would be centered on merit-making activities, the pursuit of Perfections, life in the here and now, life in the hereafter, etc. Khun Yai would often praise the virtue of chastity practice and would say things like,

*“The life of someone that practices chastity is like that of a bird flying freely in the air. It has its wings and tail and can go wherever it wants because it is free. Likewise, when we practice chastity, we are free to do whatever we want with our life. If we have 100 bahts, we can spend all 100 bahts if we so wish. But, if we marry, we can spend only 50 bahts of the same 100 bahts. And after one child, it’s down to 25 bahts. After two children, it’s down to 12.50 bahts. After three children, now we will probably have to go into debt. Children are cute when they are little, but when they grow up they become stubborn. They will in turn grow up to be stubborn parents. Just think, they are our own children and they still turn out stubborn. Therefore, it’s best to stay single. A single person’s life is easy and happy. A single person has the opportunity to pursue Perfections to the fullest extent.”*

Khun Yai regarded Luang Por Dhammajayo with special concern, she would often say to him, *“Don’t keep any secrets from me. You need to tell me everything so that I can help you. Remember that I am like your father and mother. I am like your grandparents. However, I am different from them in that I am not only concerned about your welfare in the here and now, but I am concerned about your life in the hereafter as well. I don’t want you to spend the hereafter in the Hell Realm because if that happened, you would not be able to meet me or*

*Luang Pu. You would not know about Vija Dhammakaya. I am concerned about your wellbeing; therefore, you must never keep anything from me.”*

Appreciating Khun Yai’s genuine concern for his welfare, Luang Por Dhammajayo made it a point to talk to Khun Yai about everything including his mistakes. Khun Yai assumed the dual roles of parent and teacher and always had wise and poignant words to say to Luang Por. Before Khun Yai gave any advice, she would first have Luang Por practice meditation until his mind was calm, clear, and bright. Only then would Khun Yai guide Luang Por to consider the situation at hand in a logical manner. Khun Yai would always teach in terms of cause and effect or the Law of Kamma in that if one takes a particular action, what consequences would follow as a result of that action both here and now and in future existences as well.

Khun Yai took care to encourage her chosen pupils to stay the course of chastity practice, since chastity practice was crucially important for learning Vija Dhammakaya at an advanced level.

In those days, Khun Yai’s followers made it an annual practice to celebrate her birthday and a large number of people showed up for the occasion on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the 2<sup>nd</sup> waxing moon. Since Khun Yai’s birthday went by the lunar calendar, each year it would fall on a different date. Some years it took place in the month of December and in other years in the month of January.

In the year B.E. 2511, Khun Yai’s birthday fell on January 10. After the older followers said their farewell to Khun Yai and only ten to fifteen university students remained to help clean up and listen to Khun Yai’s words of advice. At one point, Khun Yai said to the students who were listening attentively to her words, “Of all my pupils, I love the lot of you the most. You’ve made me proud because you’ve practiced meditation diligently and earnestly and you’re making good progress. But, you know I will love you many times more if you will quit smoking.”

Khun Yai’s words were sacred and powerful. As soon as Khun Yai finished the last sentence, every student that smoked at the time including Luang Por Dattajeevo put their cigarettes in Khun Yai’s spittoon. They also vowed that they would never touch another cigarette again for the rest of their lives. After everyone had left and Luang Por Dhammajayo was alone with Khun Yai, Luang Por decided to give Khun Yai his most precious gift by vowing that he would practice chastity for the rest of his life. This very special birthday gift made Khun Yai feel so very proud and joyous.

Luang Por Dhammajayo’s vow of chastity motivated many of Khun Yai’s pupils to follow his example. It had then become a tradition that on Khun Yai’s birthday, some of her pupils would present to her the gift of chastity practice. But, much later on, Khun Yai abolished the practice. The reason was that some of her pupils had to break their vow later on. And Khun Yai did not want any more of her pupils to have to incur the Kammic retribution for breaking their vow.

At Dhammaprasit House, meditation sessions took place on the upper floor while the lower floor was used for cooking, having meals, and storing things. As time went by, Khun Yai sensed that there was flirting going on among some of her pupils. Khun Yai understood what deleterious effect romance could have on meditation practice and on working for the Buddhist Cause; therefore, she made it a point to seat the men on one side and the women on the other side during meditation practice. This has later become one of the instituted rules of Wat Phra Dhammakaya.

## **Khun Yai Coached the Team Members**

In inculcating the love for meditation practice in her pupils, Khun Yai did it by first training role models. For the men, Khun Yai had chosen Luang Por Dhammajayo and she coached Luang Por Dattajeevo to follow Luang Por Dhammajayo's example. For the women, Khun Yai had chosen Ms. Kangkare Jirachutiroj or more frequently referred to as 'Pee Keng', who was well loved by the female pupils. Khun Yai said that *she disliked it very much when members of the team became romantically involved.*

To prevent such unwanted incidents, strict rules were applied. For example, at the end of the meditation session each night at 8 p.m., Pee Keng would lead the women to the bus stop and make sure that everyone boarded the bus together. The men would leave about 10 to 20 minutes later. On nights that certain young men had to leave early, Khun Yai would have the men leave together first and waited until they boarded the bus before the women left Dhammaprasit House.

Khun Yai took every measure to make sure that her male and female pupils did not have any chance to get romantically involved when they came to practice meditation at Dhammaprasit House and Pee Keng strictly followed Khun Yai's policy.

It can be said that Khun Yai was behind every aspect of Wat Phra Dhammakaya. She started the work by training a group of leaders first. It took her almost ten years to train this group of leaders. These ten years were spent drilling into the leaders shared ideal and mission so that they could think and act as one. They had learnt to work together effectively and harmoniously, each member knowing what his role was and how he fit into the overall scheme of things.

Khun Yai had obeyed Luang Pu's command by remaining at Wat Paknam to wait for the rightful heir of Vija Dhammakaya. While Khun Yai waited for Luang Por Dhammajayo to show up, she had begun to gather together the people that would later become members of the Dhammakaya Community. Khun Yai began her mission by teaching meditation practice in earnest. She began her day by practicing meditation from 4 a.m. until breakfast. Late in the morning around 8.30 a.m., she would start teaching meditation practice.

Initially, her students comprised mostly of householders, some were in their working years, and others were much older. They came to see Khun Yai because their children or

grandchildren had been ill and had been in and out of several hospitals without much improvement. Some came because their child, their husband or wife had run away from home. Some came to consult with Khun Yai because of conflicts at work. Some came because they missed their departed loved ones and wanted to make merit on their behalf. They came to ask Khun Yai to deliver the merit to them.

Khun Yai wanted these people to benefit as much as possible from their visit; therefore, she never told them right away that she would help them. She would say to them instead, “Hold on, leave everything be for now. It’s time to practice meditation so that your mind will be calm and clear.” Initially, some people might feel somewhat uneasy, but they had to obey Khun Yai because they wanted her help. Khun Yai expertly led them into meditation as she got ready to deliver the merit earned to the deceased. Some people might have some experience practicing meditation with Luang Pu earlier and were able to experience a bright light, peace, and joy while they meditated with Khun Yai. As a result, they came to see Khun Yai often and later brought their relatives and friends to see Khun Yai as well.

Another clever thing that Khun Yai did was to give relevant advice to the people during the last 5 or 10 minutes of meditation. She never mentioned names, but would say things to warn certain people if she saw relevant visions through her Dhammakaya-Eye. Such a practice was highly effective, since everyone was in a gentle, pliable state of mind during meditation and could readily receive advice from Khun Yai.

Luang Por Dhammajayo received special training from Khun Yai because he was the role model. Once Luang Por Dhammajayo had been trained to the point where he shared Khun Yai’s ideal and mission completely, she had Luang Por invite his friends to come to Dhammaprasit House. Once Luang Por Dattajeevo had committed himself to the ideal and mission, he too invited his friends to come to Dhammaprasit House. Once new members understood the ideal and mission of the community, they too brought their friends along to Dhammaprasit House. As a result, more and more university students came to learn meditation from Khun Yai. At the same time, Khun Yai had set up rules and orders for the young people to follow in order to ensure that every team member could work together effectively and harmoniously.

The principles exercised by Khun Yai were the very same ones that have been used by every Bodhisatta to accomplish each major task in their lives while they were pursuing Perfections. After Self-Enlightenment, our Lord Buddha trained a new group of people that included Phra Sariputra and Phra Moggalana. Khun Yai, despite having no formal education, but equipped with the perfect insight of Phra Dhammakaya, could accomplish what was difficult to accomplish. Khun Yai had spent almost ten years training Luang Por Dhammajayo, Luang Por Dattajeevo, and the group of pioneering monks to begin the work of propagating Vija Dhammakaya worldwide. Another characteristic that helped Khun Yai to be the great teacher of a large number of followers, most of whom are highly educated, was her resolute nature. Whatever task she undertook, she would persist until it was finished.

## Luang Por Dhammajayo's Ordination

In April, B.E. 2512, Luang Por received a Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Economics from Kasetsart University. Now that Luang Por had already graduated from university, Khun Yai felt that he was ready to enter the monkhood and should ordain before the Rains-Retreat of that year.

When Khun Yai mentioned her plan to Luang Por, Luang Por agreed with her readily. Khun Yai was so happy that all the work she had undertaken for the sake of Vijja Dhammakaya was about to bear fruit. That evening in front of her students, Khun Yai made the announcement about Luang Por's ordination. Everyone was delighted to have heard the blessed news.

On August 27, B.E. 2512 which fell on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 9<sup>th</sup> waxing moon, Luang Por was ordained at Wat Paknam. His Preceptor was the Venerable Phrathepvoravetee (currently Somdej Pramaharajamangalajarn). Luang Por was given the Pali name '*Dhammajayo*', which means '*One that is victorious because of Dhammakaya*'.

Luang Por was determined to remain in the monkhood for life. He wished to dedicate his life to Buddhism with the aspiration that he would propagate Vijja Dhammakaya worldwide.

## Founding Wat Phra Dhammakaya

### Finding Land for the Temple

After entering the monkhood, Luang Por Dhammajayo still went to practice meditation at Dhammaprasit House except that he was devoting more time to meditation practice. More and more people came to practice meditation at the house especially on the first Sunday of every month. On those days, the upper floor would be packed and there would be people sitting on the stairs as well. Eventually the lower floor, which had been used as a place for preparing food and other offerings, became filled to the brim with people. The crowd filled every available space in the yard and the walkway all the way to the gate, which had to be kept open so that the people standing or sitting outside the gate could participate in the Food-Offering Ceremony.

The situation had prompted Khun Yai to begin thinking about building a new temple. At the time she was thinking that she would require 50 rais (or 20 acres) in order to accommodate her followers and serve as a place to propagate Vija Dhammakaya worldwide. Khun Yai assigned the nun Tavin Vattirangkoon (who was still a householder at the time) to purchase the land from a meritorious and wealthy noblewoman called Lady Prayad Padayapongsa-visudtatipbodi by using the wealthy woman's daughter as a go-between. However, Lady Prayad chose to offer one parcel of land covering 196 rais and 18 square meters located in Tambon Khlong Sam in Amphoe Khlong Luang in the province of Pathum Thani to the Dhammakaya Community.

In that period, a few of Khun Yai's students had worked together to write a small book entitled *'Walking toward Happiness'*. The book contained Khun Yai's biography and short biographies of some of Khun Yai's students. During the process of writing this book, Khun Yai would go into meditation to personally bring the merit from Nibbana to bless every single letter of the book so that whoever read it would be inspired to come and help build the new temple.

Khun Yai was a superb administrator. Before the construction work began, Khun Yai would call a meeting of her followers in order to point out to them a few things.

*"We are helping to build a temple, a large temple with extensive grounds. Once we have decided to build this temple, we must do our best job at it. However, in carrying out any major project, it is inevitable that conflicts will arise. Therefore, I want all of you to ask yourself this question, if conflicts arise in the future and you must exchange words, will you stay mad because of the argument? If so, you need to move to the back. If not, then move closer to where I'm sitting."*

Luang Por Dattajeevo was sitting at the front and he remained in his seat to signify that he would not allow any argument to make him angry. No one sitting in the back thought to move closer to Khun Yai, however.

Therefore, Luang Por Dattajeevo had been entrusted by Khun Yai and Luang Por Dhammajayo to supervise the construction and guard the temple grounds. Meanwhile, Khun Yai and Luang Por Dhammajayo remained at Dhammaprasit House to raise the necessary funds.

Khun Yai had many followers, but few believed in Luang Por Dhammajayo because he was still a very young monk. They also doubted that he would remain long in the monkhood. The temple construction had a starting budget of only 3,200 bahts and the responsibility to raise the necessary funds rested squarely on Khun Yai's shoulders.

Although Khun Yai had to start building the temple with just a small amount of money and a piece of arid, fallow land at the age of 60, there was no doubt in her mind that she could do it. She continued to stay true to her ideal and mission, which was the propagation of Vija Dhammakaya worldwide in order to bring true peace and happiness to everyone in the world.

## **Starting the Construction**

Construction of the temple began on Magha Puja Day, which was on February 20, B.E. 2513. Luang Por Dattajeevo was in charge of supervising every facet of the construction while Khun Yai served as consultant. Khun Yai also nurtured every team member's spirits and gave them plenty of encouragement.

In the beginning, the different branches of government had been contacted for help. The initial phase of the construction involved trench digging and the help came from the Department of Irrigation. Road construction inside the temple was aided by the Air Force Department of Civil Engineers. Building designs were provided by the Department of Public Works.

One day during the time when the trenches were being dug, there was a shortage of funds and more than 10,000 bahts were needed to pay the workers in the following morning. Luang Por Dattajeevo asked Khun Yai for the money; Khun Yai said that all she had at the time was a little over 1,000 bahts. Luang Por Dattajeevo looked worried, so Khun Yai asked him to go and practice meditation while she fetched the necessary fund by employing Vija Dhammakaya.

Luang Por Dattajeevo did as told, but he could not keep his mind still. He was far too worried about not being able to pay the workers. On that day, Khun Yai practiced meditation from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., which was longer than usual. Later on, Luang Por Dattajeevo mumbled something like if there was no money to pay the workers the next day, there would surely be trouble.

Khun Yai assured him that she could see with her Dhammakaya-Eye that the money was coming. There was nothing else Luang Por Dattajeevo could do, so he bade Khun Yai goodnight and said that he would be back for the money the next day. Just as he opened the door, he saw a man sitting on the steps in front of the house. Luang Por and the man exchanged greetings and

it turned out that the man had been waiting there since 7 p.m. He could not enter the upper floor of the house because the door was closed while everyone inside was practicing meditation. The stranger said that before his father passed away, he told him to make merit by giving 30,000 bahts to Khun Yai and the Dhammakaya Community. This incident was but just another example of Khun Yai's peerless insight, which came from her Dhammakaya-Eye.

Some time later, Luang Por Dattajeevo resigned from his job in order to devote all of his time to the construction of the temple. During the construction, there were incidents of thefts perpetrated by ignorant people living near the temple. They came inside the temple grounds and stole boats and everything else they could get their hands on. Some stolen items were later recovered, but others were not. At the time there were ill wishers that spread lies through the media about the Community with the intention to rouse the local people to become suspicious of the Community and its undertaking.

On one occasion, after one boat had been stolen and it was replaced with a new boat, which was being treated with waterproof material and left to dry in the sun, it turned out that this second boat was stolen as well. Luang Por Dattajeevo did his own investigative work and was able to come up with the identity of the thief. Luang Por was livid especially when the thief dared him to a duel. When another Sunday came by and Luang Por Dattajeevo went to practice meditation at Dhammaprasit House as usual, his heart was still filled with anger at the boat thief. The next day was Monday and the construction team had to return to the construction site. Just as they were about to bid Khun Yai farewell, Khun Yai told them that they had been working very hard and that they should remain there to practice meditation for another day or so. As a result, the team had the opportunity to practice meditation for two days in a row. On the second day of meditation, Khun Yai held her hands up in a Namaskar and made a resolute wish. She took much longer than usual, so Luang Por Dattajeevo asked her afterward what she was wishing for. Khun Yai answered, ***"I made a resolute wish that in my future existences should my retinue and I be surrounded by a large enemy army, let them not be able to kill me or any of my retinue. And at the same time, let not any of my retinue or me ever think of killing anyone or anything, not even an ant or a termite."***

Khun Yai's words along with the two-day long meditation practice dispelled all of the anger stewing in Luang Por Dattajeevo's heart. From that moment on, Luang Por Dattajeevo made the decision never to take offence at anyone again. Khun Yai knew Luang Por Dattajeevo to be a person quick to anger and never backing down from any confrontation especially if he was in the right. Khun Yai did not want Luang Por to commit misdeeds, but wanted him to perform only wholesome deeds and accumulate only merit. She could have right away forbidden Luang Por to retaliate against the boat thief, but instead she had chosen to employ the best corrective measure of all in the form of the Lord Buddha's Teachings.

At the time the construction team was working around the clock on the project. A lot of the work had to do with leveling the grounds and coming up with appropriate work plans. There were many heated discussions in every meeting, yet no conclusions could be drawn.



Khun Yai did not attend the meeting, but would stay close by to observe the situation. When she saw that the discussion was getting too heated and heading nowhere, she would order the meeting adjourned by these simple words. “The meeting is apt to last a very long time. So come to practice meditation with me first.” At her invitation, every team member sat down to practice meditation with Khun Yai for about two hours. After meditation and when everyone’s mind was clear and bright, Khun Yai would then allow the meeting to resume.

There were times when Khun Yai knew in advance that conflicts would arise. In those times, she would say to the team members as they got ready to have a meeting, “The weather isn’t all that nice today. It’s hot and stifling. It’s certainly not a good time to hold a meeting. Why don’t you wait until the sun is less hot and the breeze is blowing to have your meeting? Right now come to practice meditation for a few hours with me.” Or sometimes she would say, “Don’t hold a meeting just yet. Come and help me arrange flowers as an offering to the Lord Buddha.” When that happened, no meeting would take place on that day.

On the following day, Khun Yai would ask the team to practice meditation with her again. At times she would use this method to delay a meeting for a few days. By then the period of stress had gone past and meditation had caused everyone’s mind to be clear and pure. The ensuing meeting was certain to bring good results. Khun Yai was a superb manager of people and work. Her insight allowed her to control situations before they got out of hand. She did and said everything in just the right way and the right amount. Her exceptional virtue and conduct made her the role model for her followers and it empowered her to unite her followers so that they stayed true to her ideal and mission. The Dhammakaya Community can say with great pride that the successful construction of Wat Phra Dhammakaya came about because of Khun Yai.

After the trench-digging project came to an end, Luang Por Dhammajayo invited Khun Yai’s followers to tour around the new temple site by departing from Dhammaprasit House in a boat with a flat-bilged hull, courtesy of Department of Irrigation. The temple began to take shape and the sight motivated several people to contribute money toward the construction of new kutis.

## **Luang Por’s Dattajeevo’s Ordination**

In the beginning of the year B.E. 2513, Luang Por Dattajeevo made the vow to practice chastity. However, Luang Por was so engrossed in the construction of the temple that he had not at all thought about entering the monkhood. Khun Yai grew concerned at the delay and said to Luang Por Dattajeevo, *“You can’t continue to remain in the secular world because you’re much too generous and are likely to give every material possession away including the shirt off your back. You’re born to pursue Perfections and it’s best that you ordain as soon as possible. As a monk, you will meet with success and wish fulfillment. You’ll be able to penetrate all the knowledge contained in the Tripitaka.”*

Luang Por Dattajeevo used to pride himself on having breadth of knowledge, but Khun Yai's words made him realize how little he knew himself. He was amazed at how well Khun Yai knew him.

Moreover, Luang Por felt that he had known nothing but warmth and happiness ever since he met Khun Yai and started to practice meditation at Dhammaprasit House. He had found Khun Yai to be at the center of everything in his life. To him, Khun Yai was like both his father and mother. Khun Yai could provide for him clear answers to every one of his questions. Khun Yai understood his every mood and knew when he was happy or unhappy. Luang Por also enjoyed the company of the people that came to practice meditation together at Dhammaprasit House as well as the many Dhamma conversations they had shared. He felt that these people were more like his real family. And for these reasons, Luang Por Dattajeevo knew that it was time for him to enter the monkhood.

Therefore, on December 19, B.E. 2514, Luang Por Dattajeevo was ordained at Wat Paknam. Initially, Luang Por still found himself greeting Khun Yai with a Namaskar because he forgot that he had already ordained as a Buddhist monk.

On the contrary, Khun Yai adapted very easily to Luang Por Dattajeevo's new and elevated status. She humbly greeted Luang Por who had once been her student with a Namaskar every time she saw him. Khun Yai still took Luang Por under her vigilant care in order to make sure that his pursuit of Perfections went as well and as smoothly as possible. For this reason, Khun Yai made two requests of Luang Por Dattajeevo.

“Venerable Datta, within the first ten years of your monkhood, I would like to ask that you:

- 1) Do not take meals or stay overnight at a lay person's house; and**
- 2) Do not give Dhamma lectures outside the temple.**

Luang Por did not fully understand Khun Yai's requests at the time, but out of his deep respect for her, he did as Khun Yai requested.

Nowadays, Luang Por Dattajeevo feels especially grateful to Khun Yai for having made those two requests of him. Through the years, Luang Por has learnt that he is not as clever as he thinks he is especially when it comes to the games that people play. In fact, he is really quite naïve. He believes that he has made it through this far because he has followed Khun Yai's advice.

Given Khun Yai's exceptional insight which came from Vija Dhammakaya, she had been extremely successful in helping her new monks to strive to become true monks and to conduct themselves appropriately.

After entering the monkhood, both Luang Por Dhammajayo and Luang Por Dattajeevo still came to Dhammaprasit House to practice meditation with Khun Yai and other team members. Khun Yai laid down a strict rule about not allowing lay people to see both Luang Pors in their kutis, but to see them only at Dhammaprasit House. If visitors were women, Khun Yai would make sure that she was around to listen to the conversation at all times. It was due to Khun Yai's strict rules and vigilance that both Luang Pors were able to pursue Renunciation Perfection so immaculately and smoothly.

It had been only a week after Luang Por Dattajeevo entered the monkhood that Khun Yai said to him, "Venerable Datta, now that you're an ordained monk, you must give Dhamma lectures."

Luang Por said to Khun Yai, "But Yai, I've never given a Dhamma lecture before."

Khun Yai answered, "It's not that difficult. All you have to do is close your eyes and consider how you've so far trained and developed yourself in different areas and use that as your lecture material. You can teach lay devotees because they still possess the same defilements of greed, anger, and ignorance. If you recount to them how you have been able to quell your own defilements, the information will be enough to satisfy them and make them happy. There's no need to go into anything deep or complex just yet. Besides, when you give such a lecture to the lay people you'll be giving it to yourself as well. Soon everyone's meditation practice will progress and your ability to give Dhamma lectures can only improve."

Khun Yai had a simple but profound way to train people and her way has been used to train new monks, novice monks, Upasakas, and Upasikas up until the present time. Besides encouraging and helping Luang Por Dattajeevo to give Dhamma lectures, Khun Yai also trained him to receive visitors as well. On certain occasions when Luang Por Dhammajayo was not available and it was time to receive visitors, people would come to ask Khun Yai questions, Khun Yai would say to them, "You should address your questions to Venerable Datta because he is a university graduate and has also studied abroad." Khun Yai simply refused to answer any questions. Therefore, Luang Por Dattajeevo had no other option but to answer the people's questions. There were of course certain questions that should never have been addressed to a monk, but Luang Por still endeavored to answer them. However, once the visitors were gone, Khun Yai would kindly advise Luang Por on how to answer the laity's questions from the viewpoint of a monk. Khun Yai had spent two whole years instructing Luang Por Dattajeevo in this matter until Luang Por could answer the lay people's questions correctly and to their satisfaction.

## The Initial Phase of Propagating Vijja Dhammakaya

Once the construction of the temple progressed to a certain point, Luang Por Dhammajayo wanted to begin giving Dhamma training in both the theoretical part and practical part to the youth and the general public. The aim of the Dhamma training is to develop a person's mind, since our mind is the very instrument which can help us improve the quality of our life. This concept originated with Khun Yai and it was expressed to Luang Por Dhammajayo at the time when he told Khun Yai that he wanted to enter the monkhood.

At the time Khun Yai explained to Luang Por Dhammajayo that both secular knowledge and Dhamma knowledge are needed in order to transform an ordinary individual into a good and decent individual, for only when a person is equipped with both kinds of knowledge that he can truly meet with success and happiness. It was also Khun Yai's hope that such good and decent individuals would later play a key role in helping to propagate Vijja Dhammakaya worldwide.

It was for these reasons that the first Dhammadayad<sup>9</sup> Training and Mass Ordination took place in B.E. 2515. Sixty university students participated in the rigorous training. They pledged the Eight Precepts, slept outdoors in umbrella-like tents, and practiced meditation. Their training took place on the fallow land beside the trench without the benefits of grown trees or buildings.

This project has since been carried out every year up until the present time. These young men are given the opportunity to learn about the Lord Buddha's Teachings so that they can use them to guide every aspect of their lives. These men are considered true sages in both the secular world and the Dhamma world. They are role models as well as contributing citizens of the country.

The year B.E. 2516 was the year that the construction team got ready to move to Wat Phra Dhammakaya, which at the time was a meditation center.<sup>10</sup> Luang Por Dattajeevo had by then entered the monkhood for two years already. The construction was near completion and Khun Yai had some Upasakas plant a large number of banana trees in the empty spaces between the different kutis.

Luang Por Dattajeevo asked Khun Yai, "Why so many banana trees? I hope you're not planning to feed me bananas?" Khun Yai answered knowingly, "No, they're here for you to kick at whenever you get angry. You can kick all the banana trees you want, but you can't kick a person because you are now a monk." Since that day, every time Luang Por saw a banana tree he could not help but smile thinking of Khun Yai's words.

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<sup>9</sup> Dhammadayad means the heir(s) of Dhamma.

<sup>10</sup> Permission was later granted by the ruling Sangha to upgrade the meditation center to a temple and it was given the name Wat Phra Dhammakaya.

In the year B.E. 2516, the construction team, which included monks and Upasakas, moved from Wat Paknam to live at Wat Phra Dhammakaya. Khun Yai would save the fruits and dried goods that the lay people brought for Luang Por Dhammajayo at Dhammaprasit House and ask the Venerable Phrakrupaladvanchai Silavanno who had not yet ordained at the time to bring them by car for the monks at Wat Phra Dhammakaya.

Initially, life was very hard at Wat Phra Dhammakaya for many reasons; one of them being that there was no potable water. The soil was acidic and that made the water acidic as well. The water had first to be treated with alum and waited for it to settle before the clear liquid could be decanted and boiled. After the water was boiled, a gel-like substance would form at the bottom of the pot and the clear, potable water had to be carefully decanted into a separate container.

## **Khun Yai's Foresight**

In the year B.E. 2518, construction of the meditation pavilion and several kutis had been completed. Luang Por Dhammajayo and Khun Yai moved from Dhammaprasit House to Wat Phra Dhammakaya. Khun Yai set up rules and orders for the temple, its residents and visitors based on her experiences while living under Luang Pu's patronage at Wat Paknam.

The most important rules are:

1. Close the temple gates at 6 p.m. and open them at 6 a.m.
2. Monks are not allowed to receive visitors in their kutis and women are forbidden to enter a monk's kuti.

Khun Yai also realized that the temple had quite a number of monks and the food received from their alms-round alone would not be sufficient for them. Moreover, Khun Yai wanted to be able to feed the lay people that came to help with the different tasks during religious ceremonies as well. Therefore, Khun Yai asked Luang Por Dhammajayo to build a kitchen within the temple just like Luang Pu had done at Wat Paknam.

By nature, Khun Yai never bothered to worry about what was being said about her person. Whatever she deemed good and useful, Khun Yai would do it. Khun Yai had the courage to make decision quickly. Khun Yai once said, ***"All my life I have my own simple way of making decision. I don't try to please anyone but the Lord Buddha. He has already taught us very clearly about what is wrong, what is right, what is good, what is bad, what is merit, what is demerit, what ought to be done, and what ought not to be done. Therefore, I do things according to His Teachings. If someone or even the entire city wants to vilify me, so be it. I care not what anyone says because I aim to please the Lord Buddha alone."***

Luang Por Dattajeevo asked Khun Yai, “Yai, has your action ever angered anyone then?”

Khun Yai answered, “Of course!”

“What did you do when someone was angry with you?”

“I just went deeper into meditation and ascended to Nibbana with my Dhammakaya to pay homage to the Dhammakayas of the Lord Buddhas there.”

It took a personage like Khun Yai with her abiding virtue and ideal to be able to lead the Dhammakaya Community here on earth to build Wat Phra Dhammakaya and use it as the center for propagating Vija Dhammakaya worldwide.

While the construction team charged ahead with the building of the Upasatha Hall, Khun Yai made it her responsibility to supervise all of the housekeeping work, which included the preparation of meals for the monks. After breakfast, Khun Yai usually practiced meditation until about 11 a.m., had her lunch, and went out with a pail and a cleaver in one hand and a hoe in another to start planting saplings. She usually asked some Upasakas to join her. She planted many hardwood trees, but the trees she planted the most were banana trees.

Sometimes the construction crew had to mow down some of her trees in order to level the ground. Khun Yai never complained that some of her trees had been destroyed, but she continued to cheerfully plant more and more trees. At 60, Khun Yai had more stamina than some of the young men that were working alongside her.

Khun Yai would finish planting trees around 4 – 5 p.m. and it was time for her to fetch Luang Por Dhammajayo some hot water in a thermos. This thermos was the same one that Khun Yai had at Dhammaprasit House. She cherished it especially and refused the offer of a new one.

After her shower, Khun Yai would practice meditation for a couple of hours before she retired for the night. Khun Yai would use her meditation sessions to fetch the community members that have not yet arrived as well as all the money needed to fund the temple and its work. Khun Yai usually got up around 3.30 a.m.

## **Teaching Her Pupils**

On every Friday, Luang Por Dhammajayo would spend some time preparing his Dhamma lecture, which was to be delivered to the lay people on Sunday. On Saturday, he would receive visitors and spend the rest of the day practicing meditation.

Luang Por Dattajeevo would lead the Upasakas, most of whom were Dhammadayads that later volunteered at the temple from Friday to Sunday. Luang Por would have them practice meditation before they went to plant trees and do other chores. In the afternoon, Luang Por

Dattajeevo would go with the Upasakas to help Khun Yai clean the temple. Luang Por Dattajeevo also had to prepare a Dhamma lecture to be given to the lay people on Sunday afternoon.

At the time that the temple ground covered 196 rais, there was plenty of work to be done in order to welcome the lay people on Sunday. This included putting out trash cans, cleaning all the toilets, etc. Khun Yai would lead the Upasakas to clean the toilets herself. Khun Yai never told anyone what to do, but she would always teach and lead by her example. And once she started to do something, people would come to help her with the work.

There was a block of twenty toilets kitty-corner from Khun Yai's kuti. She would show the Upasakas how to thoroughly clean the toilet bowl itself, the toilet floor and walls using a small amount of detergent and an implement. When they saw how Khun Yai cheerfully did this chore, they too were inspired to do the same. Khun Yai would always teach that we must do our very best in this lifetime so that we will meet with only comfort and ease in our future lifetimes.

Khun Yai also oversaw the kitchen and its every aspect. She taught temple attendees how to do the dishes, how to arrange them on the dish drainer so that they could drain properly, how to stack the dry dishes and store the silverware. The kitchen was so clean and neat that everyone who saw it could not help but be very impressed.

At the time rumors were rife that college graduates had ordained as monks and they were building a very large temple, so on and so forth. One day, the chief monk of the monastery division came to Wat Phra Dhammakaya to check things out for himself. He did not look at anything except for the toilets. Having seen them, he said, ***"This place is good. It will flourish in days to come."***

Even before the construction of the temple was completed, Khun Yai paid attention to such minute things as how to arrange the sandals and shoes that had been removed before entering the building, how to store the brooms, how to hang the rags out to dry, etc. Khun Yai once said to Luang Por Dattajeevo,

"Although things at the temple are not in place just yet, still, the lay people that attend our temple especially on Sundays ought to be able to gain as much as possible from their attendance. Our monks here are fairly new and cannot yet deliver profound Dhamma lectures. Still, we can help the lay people by keeping our temple clean, cool with lots of shade, and conducive to meditation practice. We can set as a good example for them things that may seem trivial by arranging everything nicely and neatly. Take for example, in just about every temple shoes are removed and left in disarray. Now, when shoes and brooms and other things are left in disarray, soon there will be litter everywhere. Such a chaotic state can hardly be conducive to calming one's mind during meditation. And it may take at least an hour for one to be able to calm one's mind. But then when one opens one's eyes after meditation one sees once again the chaotic state of things all around one. This can cause the benefit derived from meditation to disappear.

But if we keep everything nice and neat, our mind will be tranquil all day long because it will automatically stay at the center of our body. This is what I've practiced and gained because it is the natural order of things. When lay people come to our temple, they may not have the opportunity to listen to a Dhamma lecture just yet, but when they see how everything here is nice and neat they will go home feeling good and may even follow our example."

Wat Phra Dhammakaya has flourished because of Khun Yai and the rules and orders that she had laid out for temple residents and temple attendees. Even newcomers have no trouble following these rules because everything is clearly marked and clear instruction is readily visible. Moreover, there are volunteers on hand to help with newcomers as well. These rules and orders have been followed to the point that they now constitute Wat Phra Dhammakaya's culture.

Khun Yai had always given excellent and practical advice to her followers. She had done the same for the people that came to work at the temple as well. They might be daily wage earners, but Khun Yai felt just as much love and kindness for them as for her followers. She wished for them to know about merit and wholesome deeds. These workers had a great deal of love and respect for Khun Yai. On one occasion, Khun Yai asked one worker, "Hey, kid, what are you thinking about when you're planting trees?" The worker answered, "I am thinking, trees, please don't die; otherwise Luang Por Dattajeevo would scold me." Khun Yai asked another worker the same question and he answered, "I am thinking, trees, please don't die and may you grow quickly so that I won't have to come back and replant more trees." Khun Yai asked another worker the same question and he answered, "I am thinking, trees, please don't die. May you grow quickly and provide shade for passers-by."

Another worker answered, "I am thinking whoever sits under the tree that I've planted, let him be able to practice meditation to the fullest extent and see Phra Dhammakaya quickly and clearly."

"That's the way to do it, kid. All the workers here are doing the same work, receiving the same pay, but you earn more merit than the rest of them."

What Khun Yai taught this worker can apply to all of us if we are earnest about the pursuit of Perfections. Whatever we are doing, whether we are standing, walking, sitting, or lying down, we must think to increase the level of our wholesomeness and decrease the level of our unwholesomeness 24 hours a day.

Khun Yai took great care to make sure that no unbecoming behavior between people of the opposite sex occurred inside the temple grounds. One day, while Khun Yai was looking over the construction site together with Luang Por Dattajeevo, she saw the male and female workers, most of whom were still young and single, throwing clumps of dirt at each other; then the young men started to hit the girls with a small stick and the girls were also hitting them back with a small stick. Khun Yai scolded them and told them to stop their horseplay. Khun Yai turned to Luang Por Dattajeevo and said, "***Please make sure that we do not allow these youngsters to play in that way because it can be damaging. First, they throw clumps of dirt at each other,***



*and then they hit each other with a small stick. Before you know it, they will be using their bare hand to hit each other, then they will touch each other's hand and on to other parts of the body. All the children that come forth all over this land started out this way. Certain rules must be applied to them and horseplay between members of the opposite sex must never be allowed. If anyone violates the rules, they must be dismissed immediately; otherwise, they may be flirting with each other and end up doing things that can defile the temple grounds."*

Since Wat Phra Dhammakaya emphasizes the teaching of meditation practice, which requires purity of the mind, speech, and body, any untoward behavior between members of the opposite sex will most certainly taint the entire atmosphere. Moreover, romantic involvement among community members may cause divisiveness and bring about the lack of harmony.

One day around 3 or 4 p.m., Luang Por Dattajeevo was walking past Khun Yai's kuti when he saw her completely immersed in her yard work. Something about Khun Yai's activity fascinated Luang Por and he had to stop and watch her work. After about five minutes, Khun Yai looked up and saw Luang Por. Luang Por Dattajeevo said to Khun Yai,

"Yai, you're old now. Doesn't yard work tire you out?"

"No, it doesn't because as I do my yard work my mind is constantly at work as well."

"What is your mind working on?"

*"Well, as I loosen the dirt, I focus my attention at my center and continue to move with my Dhammakaya inward in order to go and see how each of the Lord Buddhas that happened in the past pursued their Perfections. I am learning from their examples so that I can see what areas in my own life still need improvement."*

Khun Yai was constantly vigilant when it came to the pursuit of Perfections. She knew that there was no better example than the Lord Buddha in this regard because before any great Bodhisatta can become self-enlightened as the Lord Buddha, he has already had to pursue Perfections to the fullest extent and across countless lifetimes. Therefore, the best way to improve our self is to purify our self further and further so that we can be purer and purer with each passing day.

By the year B.E. 2524, Khun Yai and the Dhammakaya Community had already spent more than ten years building Wat Phra Dhammakaya and overcoming different obstacles. Finally, Wat Phra Dhammakaya became a beautiful temple, a peaceful, green and lush place where people could come and experience the peace and joy of meditation.

Khun Yai was advancing in years, but she was still the same disciplined, active self. She was getting up between 4 and 5 a.m. to practice meditation. By 6.30 a.m., her personal assistant would bring her breakfast tray to her in her kuti. After breakfast, Khun Yai would put on her white woolen hat, her white woolen scarf, her white socks and shoes before she went to oversee the temple's kitchen. When the weather was cooler, Khun Yai would put on her gloves and thick socks as well.

Often times, Khun Yai would be fully dressed thus when she went to pull weeds outside her kuti or she would bring the saplings grown from seeds in plastic bags in order to have them planted. ***“These saplings will grow up to be nice trees. If they are left by the wayside, the bantams will eat them. I want to bring these saplings for the gardeners to plant so that our temple will be filled with many trees.”***

Khun Yai loved her trees but there were many bantams and peacocks in the temple that fed on their seeds. For this reason, Khun Yai had a low bench built beside her kuti so that she could use it to store bags containing dirt and saplings.

### **Khun Yai’s Humility**

Khun Yai respected rules and she possessed true humility. Khun Yai respected the rules of the temple even though she was the person that laid them down in the first place. Khun Yai knew exactly who and what she was and never felt the need to impress anyone. When Khun Yai was around the Upasakas, she would say to them, ***“I am now no different than you and I obey the rules the way that you do. I consider myself one of the temple residents and I go along with whatever the abbot says.”***

When Khun Yai spoke to Luang Por or any monk, she would hold her hands up in a Namaskar in spite of the fact that she was the teacher of Luang Por and every monk in the temple. Moreover, whoever showed up at the temple, Khun Yai would always greet him/her first with a Namaskar.

One morning in November, B.E. 2530 while Luang Por Dhammajayo was having his breakfast, Khun Yai respectfully approached Luang Por while holding her hands together in a Namaskar.

***“Luang Por, I’ve thought about offering Kathina for a few years now. I’ll be 80 this year and I would like to at least once in my life be a Kathina leader.”***

***“Yai, that’s a good idea. I’m glad that you’re going to be a Kathina leader this year.”***

Khun Yai was very pleased but within a few days she decided not to do it. When asked for her reason, Khun Yai said, ***“No, no. It’s better to let someone else be a Kathina leader. I am a temple resident, it’s against the rules to be a Kathina leader.”*** Khun Yai was concerned because from the beginning, it had always been a lay person that assumed the role of Kathina leader.

Luang Por said to her, ***“Yai, you are the founder of Wat Phra Dhammakaya. It is fitting for you to be a Kathina leader. All of your followers will be only too happy for you. You should go ahead and do it.”***

From that point on, Khun Yai went to different parts of the country to visit her followers and tell them about the Kathina. She invited everyone to join her in contributing to Kathina that year. She told them how their contribution would earn them immeasurable merit. Given Khun Yai's Vija Dhammakaya prowess, it meant that the center of Khun Yai's body was the dwelling of countless Dhammakayas. This made Khun Yai an exceptional field for cultivating immeasurable merit.

On November 6, B.E. 2531, once again Khun Yai was the Kathina leader and the ceremony was attended by a large number of lay people. Every participant was filled with great joy as they made immeasurable merit by contributing to Khun Yai's Kathina.

## **Paying Homage to Luang Pu**

As an increasing number of lay people came to attend the temple to learn the Dhamma and meditation practice, Wat Phra Dhammakaya had had to train new personnel and erect additional buildings in order to accommodate more and more lay people and make preparations to propagate Vija Dhammakaya worldwide.

By this time, Khun Yai's advanced age had prevented her from walking around the temple. However, she could still get around in a trishaw driven by an Upasaka.

Some time later, Luang Por Dhammajayo wished to pay special homage to Luang Pu because he had always felt deeply grateful to Luang Pu for having discovered Vija Dhammakaya on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 10<sup>th</sup> waxing moon in the year B.E. 2460. Luang Pu's discovery has made it possible for so many Buddhists to understand the core teachings of the Lord Buddha, to experience the indescribable peace and joy of attaining Phra Dhammakaya, to attain Super-knowledge through the Dhammakaya-Eye, etc.

Luang Por wished to cast Luang Pu's image in pure gold as a way of paying special homage to Luang Pu and at the same time give the lay people the great opportunity to pay homage to Luang Pu's gold image. When Luang Por spoke to Khun Yai about this matter, Khun Yai was overjoyed.

She said, *"That's an excellent idea. I've dedicated my life to the practicing and teaching of Vija Dhammakaya. I've spent the past 20 years building this temple and working so hard that I once fell seriously ill. I've done it all as my way of paying homage to Luang Pu. However, I have only worshipped him at the refined level, but I have not been able to think of a way to worship him at the physical level. I'm happy that Luang Por wishes to cast Luang Pu's image in pure gold. I will employ Vija Dhammakaya to fetch the people that possess merit and Perfections to come and help make this endeavor a success."*

As a result, on Magha Puja Day, February 25, B.E. 2537, a great ceremony was held where Luang Pu's image was cast in solid gold weighing a total of one ton. The ceremony was presided over by the Most Venerable Phradhammapannabodi<sup>11</sup>, the current Abbot of Wat Paknam, and attended by Khun Yai, Luang Por, and their followers nationwide.

## **Building the Great Dhammakaya Cetiya**

A year later, Luang Por wished to build the Great Dhammakaya Cetiya to serve as the center for Buddhists worldwide. Luang Por envisioned the Cetiya to be the place where Buddhists could come and practice meditation together. Khun Yai was very much in favor of the project and gave Luang Por her total support.

Luang Por also wished to erect two more buildings, which included the Great Memorial of Phramonkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro) in order to house Luang Pu's gold image as well as the International Dhammakaya Assembly Hall to accommodate the ever increasing number of lay people that came to attend different religious ceremonies at the temple. All three construction projects were carried out simultaneously along with the work to propagate Vijja Dhammakaya to Europe, North America, Australia, Africa, and the rest of Asia.

By then, it had been more than 30 years since Wat Phra Dhammakaya was founded. Over the years, the construction projects, the work of propagating Vijja Dhammakaya, the training of new and existing personnel, which had been carried out simultaneously, seemed to have increased hundreds of folds. The reason was that Luang Por Dhammajayo and Khun Yai's followers wished to hasten the completion of all three projects so that Khun Yai could see them before she departed from this world.

Khun Yai was one of Luang Pu's top Vijja Dhammakaya pupils and she had done her part in carrying on Luang Pu's legacy by passing on Vijja Dhammakaya to Luang Por Dhammajayo. And now Luang Por is carrying on Luang Pu's legacy by using Wat Phra Dhammakaya as the center for propagating Vijja Dhammakaya worldwide.

Khun Yai has left for us the legacy of her exceptional virtue and exemplary conduct and the way she had dedicated her life to the practice and teaching of Vijja Dhammakaya. Khun Yai has left for us a life which serves as a perfect role model for all of us as well as the people of future generations. Khun Yai founded Wat Phra Dhammakaya and made it what it is today.

At almost 90, Khun Yai was taken in her trishaw to visit the construction site of the Great Dhammakaya Cetiya which against all odds would soon be completed. On Earth Day, April 22, B.E. 2543, it was the day that the Dhammakaya Community celebrated the completion of the Great Dhammakaya Cetiya. Khun Yai could not walk then and had to attend the ceremony in her

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<sup>11</sup> He is currently holding the monastic title of Somdej Pramaharajamangalajarn.

wheelchair. Luang Por Dhammajayo and Khun Yai's followers were only too happy to see that she had lived long enough to see the completion of the Great Dhammakaya Cetiya.

On that day, Khun Yai was taken in a car to tour around the Cetiya during the day and at night. Khun Yai looked upon the great Cetiya, the one hundred thousand monks and novice monks, and hundreds of thousands of her followers with smiles of joy. She looked at the golden Dhammakaya Images that were installed on the top part of the Cetiya numbering about 300,000. She looked at her followers all clad in white and marveled at the Great Maha Dhammakaya Cetiya. It was indeed a fitting sight for Khun Yai, the Peerless One, to witness.

## **Khun Yai's Passing**

During the few years in which the Great Maha Dhammakaya Cetiya was being built, Khun Yai was often heard saying, "I wish to go home." However, Luang Por Dhammajayo kept asking Khun Yai to continue living so that she could see the completion of the great Cetiya and Khun Yai consented.

Several months after the grand celebration of the great Cetiya and on September 10, B.E. 2543, Khun Yai departed from the world at the age of 92. As a sign of deep love, gratitude and respect, Luang Por Dhammajayo and the Dhammakaya Community had labored for an entire year to arrange the grandest cremation for Khun Yai, which took place on February 3, B.E. 2545.<sup>12</sup>

This cremation ceremony was one of the biggest religious events ever held at Wat Phra Dhammakaya. It was the first time in the history of Thailand that abbots and monks from more than 30,000 temples totaling 100,000 were present at the same place and at the same time. It was also the first time that the Dhammakaya Community had the opportunity to offer alms to such a large company of monks. There were also many monks who came from abroad to attend the sacred and grand ceremony.

Khun Yai's cremation has been and will be talked about for a long, long time to come. It was and still is one of the biggest religious events in the history of Buddhism in Thailand. It was one way for Khun Yai's followers to demonstrate to the world Khun Yai's exceptional virtue and exemplary life. Luang Por Dhammajayo often says, ***"Had it not been for Khun Yai, there would not be Wat Phra Dhammakaya. There would not be the Dhammakaya Community that comes to pursue Perfections together the way we are doing now."***

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<sup>12</sup> February 3 of every year is considered to be the day of the Dhammakaya Masters. It was the day that both Luang Pu and Khun Yai Tongsuk departed from this world and it was also the day that Khun Yai's body was cremated.

## Khun Yai's Teachings

Khun Yai's life was exemplary in every way. She is the example of a pure and beautiful life born of self-discipline. Khun Yai had given many words of advice to her followers. They arose out of the profound wisdom of her Vija Dhammakaya prowess and are most worthy of attention. Whoever practices according to Khun Yai's teachings will experience increasing purity and happiness. Her teachings are many and only a selected few are presented here.

### **Not Pretty At All** *(Given on November 5, B.E. 2522)*

Khun Yai had the following to say about female beauty.

*“In my contemplation, I regard women not as a gender of beauty simply because it is our negative Kamma that gives us the female gender. Women may try to dress themselves from their head to their toes, but I can still see no real beauty in them and can see only the negative Kamma that gives birth to the female gender. Any man that falls for a woman for her so-called beauty will not be able to follow through with their pursuit of Perfections. As for me, I repeatedly make the same resolute wish to practice chastity in every lifetime.”*

### **One Drop at a Time Can Eventually Fill the Water Jar to the Brim** *(Given on February 2, B.E. 2518)*

Khun Yai had the following to say about meditation practice.

*“It is a fact that one drop of water at a time can eventually fill the water jar to the brim. Therefore, we must practice meditation and make merit regularly so that we can accumulate merit all the time. If we practice meditation regularly, one day we will be able to penetrate the Truth. We should never be lazy. We should never be too concerned for other people, but should endeavor to accumulate our own merit as much as possible. No one can go to help us after we die. We alone can help our self and we can do it by practicing meditation and making merit regularly. It is better that we endeavor to put in the effort up until our last breath. We must remember that we reap what we sow and it behooves us to do the best we can while we can and until our final moments.”*

**Overcome Phya Mara with Goodness** (Given on March 4, B.E. 2523)

*“In my life, I’ve performed only wholesome deeds. And I have endeavored to perform them as much as possible so that my body, speech, and mind can become increasingly pure. We can overcome Phya Mara with goodness. Besides performing wholesome deeds, I also make this resolute wish all the time, “Let Phya Mara never be able to block my insight<sup>13</sup>.” When Phya Mara cannot block us from our insight then we will have the insight to see and know things for what they really are. We can see and know things correctly and accurately. Moreover, we will not allow Phya Mara any opportunity to teach us and force us to commit misdeeds.*

*I also make another resolute wish, “Let me never lose to Phya Mara, but to know victory in every lifetime until Phya Mara can be eradicated and I can attain Nibbana.” After I make each resolute wish, I employ my Dhammakaya-Eye to look at my Merit Sphere as well as the level of purity in my body, speech, and mind. I can see that my Dhamma Sphere is so very bright and that pleases me. I also look into my previous lives and there I can see only goodness and purity. What I see makes me realize that victory is already mine and I merely have to live out this lifetime. From the next lifetime onward, everything in my life will be perfect. I will never encounter anything bad again because I’ve made so many resolute wishes. I will meet only with good things, good people, and good circumstances. Victory is already mine. I will be able to successfully eradicate Phya Mara because I’ve accumulated an immeasurable amount of goodness.”*

**I Fight Every Battle in Life with Merit** (Given on May 5, B.E. 2523)

*However someone mistreats me, I do not react in any way. I may submit to a person or to an unfavorable situation on the outside, but inside I do not submit to anyone or anything. And I emerge victorious every time. Inside, I fight every battle all the way. I fight with the most effective weaponry of all and this weaponry is merit. I go deeper and deeper into my center. The deeper I go, the more insight I gain and eventually I win because of my own merit.”*

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<sup>13</sup> It is the insight which is gained through the Dhammakaya-Eye.

**I Defer to Everyone** (*Given on October 22, B.E. 2519*)

*I've always made it a point to defer to everyone. I work on reducing my own stubbornness and I work on being genuinely humble. We must defer to people so that we can continue doing good deeds. We must persevere and defer to others so that they can love each other and work together as a team. If we can defer to others, then every job gets done and everyone can earn merit.*

**We Should Do Things So That We Can Be Praiseworthy** (*Given on April 19, B.E. 2535*)

*When I walk around the temple and see that the brooms are not being properly stored, I will tell the people involved to redo it. This is what I say to them, "It's important that we keep everything nice and neat so that we can meet with all things nice and neat in our future lifetimes. We can use whatever is here in the temple, but once we are done using it, we must put it back in the same way that we found it. If we keep everything nice and clean we are setting a good example for others. If we keep everything messy and dirty we are setting a bad example for others. A person that does everything cleanly and neatly is praised by human beings and celestial beings alike.*

**Taking Good Care of Things** (*Given on February 15, B.E. 2535*)

*Whatever we are going to do, we must take the time to plan everything out carefully first. If we build something but cannot maintain it, then there is no point in building it. We must be able to maintain whatever we build; otherwise, we should not bother building it. I've built a temple and I've taken the time and effort to look after it.*

**The Reason that I Can Practice Vija Dhammakaya** (*Given on November 5, B.E. 2522*)

*I've been a person possessed of purity in body, speech, and mind. I've observed the Precepts. I possess truthfulness. And I love meditation practice more than anything else in the world. It's for these reasons that as soon as I arrived at Wat Paknam, Luang Pu gave me permission to practice Vija Dhammakaya right away. Normally, a person must go through several tests repeatedly before he is allowed to practice Vija Dhammakaya. But, it was not that way for me.*



**Keeping My Possessions Safe** (*Given on June 7, B.E. 2524*)

*Wherever I am, I help keep other people's possessions safe. I take good care of them as if they were my own. I take good care of my own possessions and I take good care of other people's possessions as well. In this way, I will be able to keep my possessions safe and other people will also help me look after my possessions in my future existences.*

**I Respect Rules and Orders** (*Given on June 7, B.E. 2523*)

*Whatever establishment we find our self in, it is important that we know its rules and orders so that we can follow them. When I first went to live at Wat Paknam, I made it a point to know the temple's rules and orders so that I could follow them. I never once thought to violate any of the rules and orders. When I went to practice Vija Dhammakaya at the Dhammakaya Workshop, I also follow every one of its rules and orders. Even after Luang Pu's passing, I still continued to follow the rules and orders. Now that I am here at Wat Phra Dhammakaya, I follow its rules and orders and encourage others to do the same.*

*I believe in following rules and orders because they help people to live together harmoniously and peacefully. All of us must endeavor to follow our temple's rules and orders and be a good example for newcomers. When every attendee of the temple follows its rules and orders, everyone stands to reap the full benefits provided by the temple and its meritorious activities.*

## Events in the Life of the Most Venerable Phra Monkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro)

B.E.	Age	Years in the Monkhood	Events
2427			Born in Amphoe Songphinong in the province of Suphanburi.
2436	9		Started school at Wat Songphinong.
2438	11		Went to school at Wat Bangpla in Amphoe Banglane in the province of Nakhon Pathom.
2441	14		Luang Pu's father died. Luang Pu became a rice merchant.
2446	19		Made the resolute wish to ordain for life.
2449	22	1	Entered the monkhood at Wat Songphinong.
2450	23	2	Went to study the Dhamma at Wat Phra Chetuponvimonmunklaram in Bangkok.
2460	33	12	Attained Phra Dhammakaya at Wat Boadbon in Tambon Bangkuvieng, Amphoe Bang Kruai in the province of Nonthaburi.
2461	34	13	Teaching Vija Dhammakaya for the first time at Wat Bangpla in Amphoe Bang Len in the province of Nakhon Pathom.
2464	37	16	Received the monastic title of Phrakrusamanadhamsamadan.
2474	47	26	Established the Dhammakaya Workshop.
2480	53	32	Khun Yai met Luang Pu at Wat Paknam.
2482	55	34	WW II broke out.
2484	57	36	Luang Pu's mother passed away.
2487	60	39	Luang Por was born in the province of Sing Buri.
2488	61	40	WWII ended.
2490	63	42	Received the title of Preceptor.
2492	65	44	Received the monastic title of Phrabhavanakosalathera.
2493	66	45	Produced the first set of sacred gifts/started the construction of Phrapariyattidham School.
2494	67	46	Produced the second set of sacred gifts.
2496	69	48	Sent a monk to teach Vija Dhammakaya in the U.K.
2498	71	50	Received the monastic title of Phramonkolrajmuni.
2499	72	51	Produced the third set of sacred gifts.
2500	73	52	Received the monastic title of Phramonkolthepmuni, Cremated his mother's body.
2502	75	54	Luang Pu passed away.